

Palestinian opposition treads gently on self-rule

By John West
Reuters

GAZA — As Palestinian self-rule turns into reality on the ground, the Islamic movement Hamas and other Palestinian opposition groups are still wondering how to deal with it.

The people of the Gaza Strip and Jericho — who seemed to grow more cynical by the day from the signing of September's PLO-Israeli peace deal to its much-delayed implementation — went wild with joy when armed Palestinian policemen marched in at last.

Hamas, which denounces the agreement but is in close touch with local opinion, joined the chorus.

The fundamentalists' first major action after the police came last week was to organise a march of welcome by some 20,000 supporters through Gaza City.

Was it a glimpse of a new Hamas, changing over to open political life? Or is it just a tactic of wait and see, expecting PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat and his self-rule authority to stumble and fail?

According to Mahmoud Zohar, a leading Hamas figure, "if Arafat comes to serve the Palestinian cause, he is welcome. If he serves Israeli goals, I do not think he will be welcome. Our action will depend on his action."

Ziad Abu Amer, a professor at Bir Zeit University, says "I do not think Hamas can afford to be totally rejectionist. And they know it. They are highly flexible operators."

Hamas officials held a series of meetings in Gaza and the West Bank this month with Arafat's Fateh faction, aiming to ensure peace between them.

Palestinian sources in Gaza say Hamas leaders are acutely aware of having something to lose if relations with the PLO deteriorate — their vast network of social and health facilities which ensure them a political base by serving thousands in the poor Gaza Strip.

They say Hamas, while not changing its ultimate goals, might come to an understanding with the PLO-led self-rule authority if its charities and societies were left intact.

Hamas and other Muslim militant groups declared in

advance that they wanted to avoid conflict with the self-rule authority.

All the opposition groups have at the same time declared support for continued armed attacks on Israeli soldiers and settlers, at least so long as they remain in any part of the territories occupied in the 1967 Middle East war.

In practice, they are likely to spend at least some time assessing the Palestinian police, a completely unknown quantity in Gaza and Jericho.

Even Islamic Jihad, the other Muslim military group, has made reconciliatory noises.

"It will remain among our priorities to avoid armed conflict with the Palestinian police and authority," the group's leader, Fathi Shuqagi, said in an interview published Sunday.

He said Jihad was looking to boost its presence as a political movement, which would represent a considerable shift for a group which has long operated as a tiny guerrilla unit.

"Islamic Jihad will exert every effort to avoid a clash, even if it is obliged to change its tactics in Gaza," he said.



SMILE RETURNS TO GAZA: Two small units of Israeli army are left in Gaza, Palestinian policeman look happy even when directing the unruly traffic in Gaza City. Only Palestinian police (AFP photo)

Yossi Sarid: Israel flexible on Syria

TEL AVIV (R) — A key cabinet minister said Tuesday Israel could compromise on peace moves with Syria if only Damascus showed the same flexibility.

Environment Minister Yossi Sarid spoke to Israel Television as U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher was in occupied Jerusalem on a shuttle mission to break the impasse with Syria.

"He (Christopher) is certainly familiar enough with the negotiations to understand that from our standpoint it's a package deal," said Mr. Sarid, who led Israeli negotiations with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

"This package deal has many important components and so

long as the Syrians will be ready to come towards us on a certain component we can also show flexibility on another component," said Mr. Sarid, a minister from the Dovish Meretz Party.

Israeli-Syrian negotiations are stuck, with Damascus demanding a full and immediate Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights captured in 1967 and Israeli refusing to discuss the extent of a pullout without a promise of full relations.

Mr. Sarid said that were Syria to show flexibility on matters of importance to Israel, including security arrangements, the Jewish state might show more readiness to compromise on "other mat-

ters." Mr. Sarid declined to identify.

In a separate interview with Israeli Army Radio, Mr. Sarid said: "The strategic key to the conflict between Israel and the Arab states is after all in Syria's hands."

Israeli officials were heartened by an editorial Sunday in a Syrian government newspaper suggesting Damascus might be prepared to bargain with Israel over the timeframe for withdrawal.

The newspaper, Tishreen, spoke of Syria being willing to accept an Israeli pullout from the strategic plateau "within a reasonable and acceptable period." But on Monday the newspaper said Syria insisted on a quick Israeli withdrawal.

Thai minister seeks end to Saudi gems case

BANGKOK (AFP) — Interior Minister Chaowalit Yongchaiyudh is pressing for an end to the lingering Saudi gems investigation and a decision on whether to arrest eight top policemen accused in the case, a ministry official said Tuesday.

Ministry Permanent Secretary Aree Wong-Araya, who is overseeing the probe into the misappropriation of \$20 million in stolen gems, has said he will decide this week whether to approve arrest warrants for eight senior officers, including former Police Chief Sawadhi Amornvivat, the official said.

"I've asked Aree to conclude the case quickly," the official quoted Mr. Chaowalit said as saying Monday. "If the case is not completed now, there may be damage."

Mr. Chaowalit said Mr. Aree must decide whether to approve the arrest warrants and take responsibility for the likely deterioration of relations with Saudi Arabia if he does not act, the official reported.

He said Mr. Aree still was checking statements the suspects gave to a ministry panel he chairs against testimony given by police.

Last week, Mr. Aree's panel rejected a police request to arrest the eight men, saying the case against them was weak and more investigation was needed. Mr. Chaowalit said

then that the matter should be handled with prudence but should be wrapped up quickly.

In 1979, a Thai servant stole jewelry from the palace of a Saudi prince and fled to Thailand. He was arrested and the loot seized, but some of the jewelry was never returned and much of what was given back was fake.

The gems case and the murder of four Saudi embassy officials and a businessman here in 1989 and 1990 soured relations between the two countries. Riyadh downgraded its embassy here and stopped giving Thai visas in 1990 to pressure Bangkok into solving the cases.

Hariri loses ground in political battle

By Andrew Tarnowski
Reuters

BEIRUT — Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri, brought in to raise Lebanon from the ruins of civil war, appeared to have lost ground politically in his standoff with the president and parliament speaker.

The billionaire prime minister decided on Saturday to go back to work after a stoppage that paralysed the government for a week, raised fears of political instability and scared Beirut's reemerging financial markets with a run on the Lebanese pound.

"The government was not reconstituted, portfolios were not swapped and the stoppage gave no results," said the Beirut daily Al Anwar, commenting on Mr. Hariri's failure to achieve his goals.

The climbdown may be particularly damaging on top of an erosion of Mr. Hariri's popularity caused by the failure of his \$12 billion rebuilding programme to bring results as quickly as many

Lebanese expected. But the political damage may be more apparent than real.

Mr. Hariri remained firmly in office as the crisis ended. Despite earlier reports of Syrian dissatisfaction with his role in the affair, he appeared to remain on good terms with Damascus — the paramount issue for any Lebanese politician.

A meeting on Saturday with President Hafez Al Assad helped control the damage to his image. A Beirut newspaper said it gave Mr. Hariri "moral compensation" for the apparent setback on the domestic front.

The showdown with President Elias Hrawi and Speaker Nabih Berri may even have won Mr. Hariri ground with Lebanon's influential Christian minority by showing them he is ready to listen to their grievances.

By risking a crisis to bring more representative Christians into the government, Mr. Hariri put angry Christian demands for more ba-

lanced treatment by the Syrian-backed government into the centre of the political stage.

In the negotiated compromise that ended the confrontation he won a commitment from Mr. Hrawi and Mr. Berri to discuss his demand for expanding the cabinet after he goes back to work.

NEWS ANALYSIS

Mr. Hariri sparked the showdown by proposing to add four members to the cabinet — two heavyweight Christians and two others to speed up reconstruction.

The proposal puzzled observers who felt Mr. Hariri was picking a fight he could not win.

They said he must have known no Christian heavyweight could agree to enter the government without major changes in its policies that he could not deliver — principally an effort to regain Lebanon's freedom of

action from Syria, which has 35,000 troops in the country and is the main power broker.

Mr. Hrawi and Mr. Berri duly blocked the reshuffle, making Mr. Hariri look powerless and proposing instead major government changes which could have weakened his cabinet support.

As Mr. Hariri stayed home in protest, aides said his aim all along was to show that the distribution of power introduced under the 1989 Taif accord that ended the civil war was unworkable.

The pact did not clearly define the roles of Lebanon's three top office-holders, allowing them to meddle in each other's business and block each other's initiatives.

Mr. Hariri believes this is blocking effective government and causing delays to his reconstruction projects, aides say.

Discontent with Taif and its partial implementation is also a major Christian grievance — a fact that increases

the possibility that Mr. Hariri may be trying to tell the Christians that he is a potential ally whose concerns coincide with theirs.

By presenting himself as a possible ally for the Christians Mr. Hariri may be seeking a major role in the election of the next president — who must be a Maronite Christian — due by the end of 1995.

Apparently aware of the threat, presidential aides said Mr. Hrawi was angry at Mr. Hariri because he was trying "to outbid the president" in his own Maronite community.

Relations between the two men have long been bad.

Mr. Hrawi is known to want to become leader of the Christian community when he steps down as president, and to want his son-in-law, Foreign Minister Paris Bouze, to succeed him.

Political sources say Mr. Hrawi wants Mr. Hariri out of government, or at least seriously weakened, before the presidential campaign



Rafik Al Hariri

gets under way.

They say he fears the combination of the prime minister's office with Mr. Hariri's financial resources and the confidence of the Syrians would give the Sunni Muslim premier unbeatable influence in the behind-the-scenes bargaining that goes into the election of Lebanon's president.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Muslim militants fight police in Egypt

ASSIUT, Egypt (R) — Muslim militants had a gunfight with Egyptian police in the southern province of Assiut Monday evening, security sources said Tuesday. Four militants were arrested, one of them wounded. The fight took place in the town of Sidfa, on the Nile 350 kilometres south of Cairo, one of the centres of activity by the militant Gama'a Al Islamiyah (Islamic Group). In the provincial capital Assiut police raided shops owned by militants, arrested 40 people and confiscated videotapes of sermons by preachers including the Gama'a's spiritual leader, Sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman. Sheikh Omar is in jail in the United States, where he faces charges that he conspired to bomb the United Nations and assassinate Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. In other raids in Assiut province, police arrested 11 suspected militants and seized 37 unlicensed weapons, including 12 automatic rifles.

Pilgrims leave Sarajevo for Mecca

SARAJEVO (R) — Hundreds of Bosnian Muslims left Sarajevo for Mecca Tuesday, the first time since the war began two years ago that Muslims from Bosnia's capital have been able to join the haj or pilgrimage. Organisers said the first of 360 pilgrims left Sarajevo Airport aboard a United Nations flight for Zagreb, where they will board an airliner sent by Saudi Arabia, which arranges the annual Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca. More pilgrims were leaving Sarajevo aboard a second U.N. flight later in the day, organisers said. A total of about 360 Bosnians are travelling on the two U.S. flights to Zagreb where they will board an airliner chartered by Saudi Arabia and head for Mecca, U.N. Protection Force officials said. They will be joined in Zagreb, the Croatian capital, by 120 Muslim refugees in Croatia. About 320 of the pilgrims are wounded Bosnian army soldiers who will be able to receive medical treatment in Saudi Arabia, organisers said.

Libyan official pays private visit to France

PARIS (R) — Libyan Foreign Minister Omar Mustafa Al Montasser spent the past weekend in Paris on a private visit, the French Foreign Minister said. A ministry spokesman said the French government was aware of the visit by Mr. Montasser, who was en route from South Africa to Libya. But he said the weekend stopover in Paris was purely private and had no diplomatic significance. France has shunned high-level contacts with Libya since the U.N. Security Council imposed sanctions on Tripoli following its refusal to turn over two Libyans suspected of responsibility for a 1988 bomb attack on a U.S. airliner over Lockerbie, Scotland. The attack killed 270 people. The spokesman said it was believed to be the first time a Libyan government official had entered France since the United Nations Security Council imposed the sanctions. Mr. Montasser stayed at the luxury Hotel Criblon, one of the Paris' most expensive hotels. The Security Council has also said Libya must satisfy the demands of a French magistrate investigating the mid-air bombing of a French UTA flight over Nigera in 1989 which killed all 171 aboard. The magistrate was barred from entering Libya in 1992. The Foreign Ministry spokesman said Mr. Montasser's visit "signifies no change in France's well-known position with regard to Libya." He added: "We demand that Libya comply with the Security Council resolutions and cooperate with French justice."

Iran condemns award for Rushdie

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran condemned on Tuesday the granting of a literary award to British author Salman Rushdie in Vienna, saying it was an insult to Islam. Foreign Ministry spokesman, Mahmud Mohammadi, blasted the move as an insult to "all Muslims and followers of other religions." "The prize was a basis for more disrespect to the divine religions," he said, quoted by the Iranian news agency. The European prize for literature, which was awarded to Mr. Rushdie in 1992, was handed over to him Monday by Austrian Minister for Education and Culture Rudolf Scholten. Mr. Rushdie has been living in hiding since he was condemned to death by the late Iranian spiritual guide Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini for allegedly blaspheming Islam in his novel "The Satanic Verses." The decision of a jury of Austrian authors to award Rushdie the prize was kept secret for a year because the authorities in Vienna said they could not ensure his security there. The government finally reconsidered its position under public pressure.

UAE to hold defence exhibition

DUBAI (R) — The United Arab Emirates will hold its second major defence exhibition in Abu Dhabi on March 19 to 23 next year, a statement from the organisers said Tuesday. The statement sent to Reuters said the International Defence Exhibition (IDEX) 1995 will be held at the Abu Dhabi Exhibition Centre. It said eight countries have reserved space in the more than 32,000 square metre indoor hall and more were expected. "With 10 months to go we are already 'two-thirds full,'" Brigadier Staff Sultan Al-Sawaidi said. "We have already arranged to build a large conference hall and an additional 6,000 square metre display hall." IDEX will emphasise electronic warfare and security systems. There will be live firing and other demonstrations. At the last IDEX show in February 1993 more than 350 arms manufacturers vied for lucrative contracts in a Gulf market which experts say is worth \$10 billion a year.

Mandela to attend OAS summit

TUNIS (AFP) — South African President Nelson Mandela is to attend the Organisation of African Unity summit in Tunis next month, Tunisian Foreign Minister Habib Ben Yahia said Monday. Speaking during a meeting here to prepare the summit Yahia said Mandela's presence at the June 13 to 15 meeting would mark a "decisive turning point" in the OAU's history and would have "considerable political impact." Confirmation of Mandela's attendance by the newly-installed president's office was not immediately available.

JORDAN TELEVISION

PROGRAMME TWO
07:30 Only
08:00 N.B.A. sport
09:00 News in French
09:15 Le Journal De L'Ystaire
09:30 News in Hebrew
19:45 Great Moments in Science & Technology
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 Top Choice for Comfort
21:00 The Best of Magic
21:30 The World of The Thirties
22:00 News in English
22:30 Poldark

PRAYER TIMES

04:03 Fair
05:32 (Sunrise) Dawn
12:32 Dhuhr
16:13 'Asr
19:31 Maghrib
21:00 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swellfish, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632783
St. Joseph Church Tel. 634590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757

Terracotta Church Tel. 622366
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541
Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel. 628543
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Assam International Church Tel. 625226
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 624328
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 694195
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 64932
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

Hot and dry weather conditions will prevail with winds southeasterly moderate to active. In Aqaba, it will be dusty with winds northerly active and seas calm.
Min./Max. temp.
Amman 17/35
Aqaba 24/37
Deserts 16/36

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDER

Jordan Valley 21/40
Yesterday's high temperature: Amman 24, Aqaba 36. Humidity readings: Amman 14 per cent, Aqaba 17 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Yousef Rashid 896301
Dr. Hisham Kan'an 792086
Dr. Walid Al Mazi 675483
Dr. Mustafa Hameed 826024
Firas pharmacy 661912
Fardous pharmacy 778336
Naijoudh pharmacy 637023
Al Salam pharmacy 625672
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shmiciani pharmacy 637660
Naijoudh pharmacy 625672
Najjo pharmacy 847632

AMMAN:
Dr. Yousef Rashid 896301
Dr. Hisham Kan'an 792086
Dr. Walid Al Mazi 675483
Dr. Mustafa Hameed 826024
Firas pharmacy 661912
Fardous pharmacy 778336
Naijoudh pharmacy 637023
Al Salam pharmacy 625672
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shmiciani pharmacy 637660
Naijoudh pharmacy 625672
Najjo pharmacy 847632

ZARQA:
Dr. Akram Haddad 985550
Khafieh pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 891228
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 893590
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 897467
Complaints 787111
Amman Municipality 010230
Repairs 623101
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone 773111
Abdell Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 774111
Radio Jordan 680100
Water Authority 815615
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615

Electric Power
Company 636381
RJ Flight Information 08-33200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 81381/332
Khafieh Maternity, J. Amn 6442816
Alkhaf Maternity, J. Amn 6424412
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhus, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shmiciani 6641714
Shmiciani 669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Musharraf Hospital 6672779
The Islamic, Abdell 666127/77
Al-Ahli, Abdell 77101/3
Italian, Al-Mubajir 77511/26
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 89161/15
Army, Marka 60224/50
Queen Alia Hospital 60224/50
Amal Hospital 674155
ZARQA:
Zarga Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarga National Hospital (09)900560
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital (09)990990
IRBID:
Princess Beama Hospital (02)275555
Great Catholic Hospital (02)27275
Ibn Al-Nafies Hospital (02)247100

AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
09:00 Aqaba (RJ)
09:30 Jeddah (RJ)
09:35 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
09:35 Brüssel, Paris (RJ)
10:15 Larnaca (RJ)
10:30 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
10:30 London (RJ)
10:30 Istanbul (RJ)
10:30 Rome (RJ)
10:30 Madrid, Geneva (RJ)
10:30 Toronto, Montreal (RJ)
10:30 Frankfurt, Vienna (RJ)
10:30 Rome (RJ)
10:30 Beirut (RJ)
10:30 Cairo (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

10:35 Cairo (MS)
11:10 Damascus (AZ)
11:25 Larnaca (CY)
11:30 Jeddah (SA)
12:25 Karachi, Abu Dhabi (PI)
16:20 Aqaba (AA)
16:20 Paris (AF)
21:15 Beirut (ME)
22:25 Amsterdam (KL)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
06:30 Aqaba (RJ)
06:30 Rome (RJ)
11:25 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
11:35 Berlin, London (RJ)
12:00 Casa Blanca, Tunis (RJ)
12:00 Istanbul (RJ)
12:00 Colombo (RJ)
12:00 Beirut (RJ)
12:00 Cairo, Aqaba (RJ)
12:00 Riyadh (RJ)
21:00 New Delhi (RJ)
22:00 Calcutta, Bangkok (RJ)
Other Flights (Terminal 2)
05:45 Beirut, Paris (AF)
06:30 Beirut (ME)
11:25 Cairo (MS)
12:10 Rome (AZ)
12:15 Larnaca (CY)
13:00 Jeddah (SA)
14:30 Abu Dhabi (GF)
16:15 Abu Dhabi, Karachi (PI)

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg.

Apple 550/650
Banana 600
Banana (Mukammur) 620
Cabbage 220/180
Carrot 350/270
Cauliflower 350/250
Cucumbers (large) 150/100
Cucumbers (small) 300/200
Eggplant 260/200
Garlic 600/400
Green beans 500/400
Lemon 480/320
Marrow (large) 220/120
Marrow (small) 200/120
Mushrooms 240/140
Onion 400/200
Onion (dry) 150/100
Peas 480/320
Pepper (hot) 300/200
Pepper (sweet) 350/250
Potato 450/350
Tomato 300/200
String beans 650/500
Watermelon 300/200
Vine Leaves 650/450

Akaileh succeeds Talhouni at Senate

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment Ahmad Akaileh Tuesday took the oath of office as a member of the Upper House of Parliament, succeeding the late Bahjat Talhouni who died in Amman on Jan. 30.

Dr. Akaileh was sworn in during a Senate session chaired by Senate Speaker Ahmad Lawzi and attended by Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali and several Cabinet ministers.

The Senate Tuesday approved the revised draft

Public Security Law of 1994, as it was referred to it by the Lower House.

The draft law was originally made up of two proposed laws. The Upper House combined them into one after making amendments to them. The draft law was referred to the Lower House, which in turn approved it.

The Senate also referred to its Financial Committee a revised draft law on the Jordanian Investment Corporation (JIC) and another on the Jordanian Exports Guarantee Corporation (JEGC).



Ahmad Akaileh

Belgian envoy points to U.N. weaknesses

By Elia Nasrallah
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Belgian Ambassador to Jordan Pierre Du Muelenaere Tuesday voiced his country's total support for the Middle East peace process in line with U.N. Security Council resolutions but also said that the world body has been ineffective in dealing with several major conflicts.

Addressing an Amman Rotary Club luncheon held in his honour at the Inter-Continental Hotel, the ambassador said that peace can best be served when it is made to cater to the social as well as economic requirements of peoples.

The world community as a whole ought to exert more serious efforts to ensure the settlement of problems that are chronic and that continue to breed tension, Mr. Muelenaere said.

Referring to the work of the United Nations Organisation, the ambassador said changes ought to come about that would ensure the representation as permanent members of each of the world continents on the Security Council so as to be fair to various nations' interests.

As to the present United Nations set up, Mr. Muelenaere said that internal differences among Security Council members have made the world body impotent in a number of cases.

Citing the example of the situation in former Yugoslavia, he said that nothing much has been accomplished yet to stop the war or to provide relief to the innocent population.

Even the NATO alliance, with all its modern technology and military power, is making different excuses for

its failure to act in a manner that would end the conflict, he said.

Referring in response to a guest's criticism of the new world order and its "double standard" dealing with regional conflicts around the world, the ambassador said that the world community represented by the United Nations General Assembly and the Security Council ought to consider seriously current proposals submitted by various nations concerning the settlement of regional issues and act in a manner that would be more fair and just to all nations.

Referring to Belgium and Jordan, and their mutual relations, he said that the two states are relatively small in size but they play significant roles in their respective regions, and maintain close cooperation in several fields.

Cabinet approves 56 new economic projects

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Cabinet Tuesday agreed to the establishment of 14 new "approved economic projects" and two "economic projects," as well as expansion plans for 40 other economic projects.

According to Information Minister Jawad Al Anani, these projects and expansions combined mean a JD 12 million investment. They serve as a positive indicator of the country's economic situation because they are expected to boost production, create more jobs and stimulate economic activity in Jordan, said Dr. Anani in a statement following a regular Cabinet session.

Under the law for encouraging investments in Jordan, all plans described as

economic projects enjoy special privileges and incentives, according to Industry and Trade Minister Rima Khalaf.

Dr. Khalaf told the Jordan Times that "approved economic projects" are exempt from income tax and any other fees for the first five years after starting operations; they also are exempt from customs duty on imported machinery and equipment used for such projects.

"Economic projects" are only exempt from customs duty on machinery and equipment purchased for the projects, said Dr. Khalaf.

When asked how the government determines whether a scheme is an economic project or not, Dr. Khalaf said that each project is evaluated on a points system which studies the project's objective, the products to be exported, employment of work-



Jawad Anani

ers, etc., then points are assigned to the project. The number of points determines whether the projects considered an "approved economic project" or simply an



Rima Khalaf

"economic project," she explained.

Meanwhile other issues discussed on the Cabinet's agenda, Dr. Anani said, were the principles set up by the

Civil Service Commission (CSC) for the appointment of civil servants and proposals for revising the CSC system with a view to introducing amendments that allow job candidates to submit other credentials (not required by the old system).

In this context, said the minister, the Cabinet proposed that sufficient authority be granted to concerned departments in the government in order to achieve gradual decentralisation of the government.

Dr. Anani said the Cabinet approved giving priority to the appointment of local citizens in the governorates' departments.

According to the minister, the Cabinet will tackle other points pertaining to the amendment of the Civil Service Commission Law in its next sessions.

TCC observes World Telecommunications Day

Corporation to instal 21 new main telephone exchanges

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Telecommunications Corporation (TCC) Tuesday observed World Telecommunications Day by announcing new plans for the installation of 21 main telephone exchange units in the governorates of Amman, Irbid, Balqa and Zarqa.

Addressing a press conference at the TCC offices Corporation Director General Ahmad Nawawi said the new projects approved by the TCC board would make available an additional 219,354 telephone

lines in two-and-a-half years. The TCC will also be installing new networks to boost the telephone exchange units in the governorates of Zarqa and Irbid by laying an additional 1,100 kilometres of cables, said Mr. Nawawi.

The new cables, which will later extend to reach the Amman area, are to be co-located at a later stage with the main lines linking the Kingdom with Syria, Egypt and Saudi Arabia, he added.

TCC sources said that cur-

rently Jordan has 300,000 telephone subscribers of whom 166,434 in the Amman area alone.

Mr. Nawawi also told the press that the TCC is studying the feasibility of converting the TCC into a state-owned company operating on a purely commercial basis. The new entity would have an independent financial and administrative status and would provide better and more efficient service by avoiding much of the usual routine, he said.

Last year, Mr. Nawawi was quoted as saying that the corporation will not be privatised despite arguments that the private sector could provide better services.

At the press conference Tuesday, he said the conversion into a commercial entity would enable the TCC to cater to and compete with all private sector services despite its remaining a government company.

Under the new system, the TCC would expand its services

and employ an additional staff of 1,500 employees over the next three years, added Mr. Nawawi.

Referring to the collections of telephone service fees, Mr. Nawawi said that 64 per cent of these bills are paid by 20,000 subscribers out of the total number of subscribers in Jordan.

He said international calls account for the majority of the total number of telephone calls made in the Kingdom.

Experts urge more public awareness of danger of chemical disasters

AMMAN (Petra) — Participants in a four-day workshop on chemical safety organised by the World Health Organisation (WHO) Tuesday stressed the importance of public awareness of safety precautions in case of possible chemical disasters.

At the conclusion of the workshop, in which delegates representing eight Middle Eastern countries took part, the participants said chemical poisoning cases in the Middle East region are on the rise and that most of the countries represented at the workshop had witnessed some emergency cases resulting from chemical and technological disasters that have left some victims.

Spreading public awareness in these countries has become extremely important since these states are still in a rudimentary phase of industrialisation and they suffer from lack of information on

toxic chemical materials and means to diagnose and treat injuries resulting from chemical accidents, the participants said.

They said despite taking some precautions against chemical accidents, which are hazardous not only to people but also to the environment, few of these countries have the capabilities to deal with such incidents because of infrastructure and legislative obstacles.

The participants in the workshop, entitled "Health Effects of Chemical Accidents: Prevention, Preparedness and Response," added that as the numbers of victims of chemical accidents increase in the Middle East, more burdens are added to these countries' health care facilities, which are still ill-prepared to deal with such accidents.

They recommended that safe and developed techniques be used to prevent disasters, suitable precautions be taken,

and early warning systems be installed to alert the authorities to chemical accidents, "underlining the importance of cooperation and coordination among all government, private sector and voluntary institutions in facing chemical hazards."

The workshop, which was organised by the WHO in cooperation with the Ministry of Health, aimed at studying the progress of an international programme on chemical safety.

The programme seeks to provide advice and guidance to the countries of the region on how to prevent chemical accidents and promote chemical safety measures throughout the world.

The programme is sponsored by the International Labour Organisation (ILO), WHO and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

Principals team up to launch language camp for students

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Because English language education in public schools, particularly in rural areas, is relatively weaker than in private schools in the Kingdom, several public school principals got together to organise an English language camp for seventh through eleventh grades in Rmmine, a small town near Baqaa.

At a brief ceremony Tuesday attended by Ministry of Education Director General Munther Al Masri, Ahmad Arabiyat, principal of Rmmine School told the Jordan Times that this idea came to fruition after discussions with other principals about their students' low level English skills.

"We concluded that our students are very weak in the English, and it is very difficult for them to express themselves in this second language," Mr. Arabiyat said.

In addition to the students' deficiency in comprehending and speaking English, in the final year of school many of them fail their Tawjihi exams or obtain low grades because of their weakness in English, according to Mr. Arabiyat.

"Students in public schools start learning English in fifth grade, attending one English

class per day, while students at private schools begin learning English in Kindergarten with at least 10 lessons weekly.

"We want to get rid of the classical and old methods of teaching a second language, and we believe this camp will serve the purpose," Mr. Arabiyat added.

The main goal of the camp, Mr. Arabiyat said, is to improve the students' English by strengthening their dialogue skills.

The three-day camp, which started Tuesday, combines 50 students from Salt Secondary School and Rmmine School. The students are divided into seven groups and each group is supervised and lectured by an English language teacher.

"We invited several teachers from different institutions to lecture and hold dialogue classes," said Mr. Arabiyat, adding that volunteers came from the Amman Baccalaureate School, Dar Al Lughat (House of Languages), the Jubilee School, and the Radii Centre in Salt.

He said the students will also experience the pleasures of outdoor camping, going on hiking trips, and participating in sports activities. They will read English newspapers and write reports at the end of each day describing their ex-

periences, Dr. Arabiyat said. At the conclusion of the three days, the students will be evaluated and prizes will be awarded to those who excelled.

"Students are not allowed to speak any word in Arabic during the camp period," Abdul Karim Saket, principal of the Salt Secondary School, the oldest school in the Kingdom, told the Jordan Times.

He said the camp slogan is: "Talk as much as you want, don't be shy, it is important to learn."

"Although it is a short period, we hope to encourage students to speak English after the camp is over," Mr. Saket said.

Rida Kharabsheh (17) said that when he heard about the new opportunity he was encouraged to enroll.

"I wanted to improve my level in English because I like the language and also to make new friends and exchange information with them," the 11th grader said.

He said it is very important for every student to attend similar camps, because he/she will face difficulties in their quest for higher education.

"I can't say I have reached the highest level in English, but I find myself able to



Seventh graders from Rmmine School Tuesday sing out their camp song at a brief ceremony to mark the opening of a three-day English language camp for public school students (photo by Rana Hussein)

express my opinion in English," he said.

Rida said he is trying to improve his English by reading books, and he will attend medical school if he achieves

the necessary grades.

According to Mr. Arabiyat, the Ministry of Education supported the idea of the camp, and will study and evaluate its benefits.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Prince Mohammad visits Prime Ministry

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Prince Mohammad, the Personal Representative of His Majesty King Hussein, Tuesday called at the Prime Ministry where he met with the Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali and was briefed on the government's plans to ensure the smooth and effective delivery of services to citizens.

Iraq praises Jordan's stand

BAGHDAD (Petra) — Iraqi Prime Minister Ahmad Hussein Khdeir Tuesday praised Jordan's stand towards the Iraqi people and said Iraq will not forget Jordan's honourable pan-Arab position. Mr. Khdeir was speaking during a meeting with Jordan's Minister of Education Khaled Al Omari and an accompanying delegation. Dr. Omari's visit to Baghdad is aimed at discussing the best means for implementing the educational agreement concluded between Iraq and Jordan and to obtain first-hand information on Iraq's educational experience, and the con-

sequences of the U.N. embargo on educational institutions there.

Ministry to study coffee prices

AMMAN (Petra) — The government will reconsider coffee prices in the Kingdom in light of the global rise in the cost of this commodity, according to Supply Minister Rami Ibrahim. The minister said prices have increased from \$1,350 per tonne as of September 1993 to a current price of \$2,098, adding that at present local coffee prices are based on previous prices.

Mail to Yemen halted

AMMAN (Petra) — The Ministry of Communications and Postal Affairs requested all post offices throughout the country not to accept any mail to Yemen until further notice, according to the ministry's Secretary General Abdullah Al Jazi. The new measure comes in response to a request by Royal Jordanian, which informed the ministry that all carriers refuse to accept any mail addressed to Yemen because of the ongoing civil strife there.

JORDAN TIMES
TEL: 667171

WHAT'S GOING ON

CONCERT

☆ Concert by Al Mawred School students at the Royal Cultural Centre at 5:00 p.m.

LECTURE

☆ Lecture in French on the 500th birthday anniversary of Rabelais entitled "Rabelais Homme De Tous Les Temps" at the French Cultural Centre at 6:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

☆ Exhibition of paintings by 20 Jordanian and Iraqi artists (including Widad Orfali, Hussein De'seh, Waddah Al Ward, Adnan Al Hilu and Mahmoud Hussein) at Orfali Art Gallery in Umm Uthaina (Tel. 826932).

☆ Exhibition by 46 artists entitled "He, Bonjour Monsieur La Fontaine" at the French Cultural Centre.

☆ Exhibition of paintings by artist Salman Al Basri at Alfa Art Gallery (Tel. 639303).

☆ Exhibition by Iraqi artist Shawkat Al Rubaie at the Italian Language Centre (9:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.) (Tel. 669348).

☆ Exhibition of water colour paintings by artist Ihab Hrebi and another exhibition of ceramics by Sajida Al Mashalki at Aln Art Gallery in Wadi Saqra (Tel. 644451, 652823).

JORDAN PHOSPHATE MINES CO LTD

Announces the invitation to tender No. 13F/94

JPMC announces the invitation to Tender No. 13F/94 for the supply, installation, commissioning and one-year maintenance of (D.C. power supply system) at Eshidiya Mine Project. The tender documents are available at JPMC offices in Amman, Supply Department. Application for documents should be accompanied by a non-refundable fee of JD (15) for each set of tender documents.

The closing date for submitting tenders is 12:00 hours local time Tuesday 7th June, 1994.

Sameh Madani
Managing Director

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The French Pianist Sebastien Cornut

Winner of the First Award of The Conservatoire National De Paris will hold a piano recital in Amman on Friday 20th of May, at 8:00 p.m. at the Philadelphia hotel

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Jordan Times

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Matter for Arab gap

THE GAP between Israel and Syria on the Golan Heights appears to have narrowed as a result of the latest shuttle diplomacy conducted by the U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher. With Damascus entertaining in principle the idea of a phased Israeli withdrawal provided that the duration is reasonable and not as prolonged as Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin would like it to be, narrowing the differences between the two sides could now be easier.

Rabin must nevertheless commit himself clearly and unequivocally to Syria's legitimate insistence on complete withdrawal from the Syrian occupied territory.

The talks between the two countries appear to be centered on whether a gradual Israeli withdrawal should be attained in 5-8 years as Rabin proposes or in less than three years as Syrian President Hafez Al Assad now accepts.

The fact that Mr. Christopher has prolonged his stay in the region suggests that progress on the Syrian-Israeli track has been registered and that with additional political efforts and negotiations the two countries could come very close to an agreement. Should this be the case, the positive developments on the Syrian front would bode well for the other tracks notably on the Lebanese and Jordanian tracks as well. Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin, who maintains that Damascus holds the ultimate key to the entire peace process, sounded upbeat last week when he said that peace with Syria could be forthcoming in the coming months.

True to its word, Jordan will soon rejoin the peace process after having resolved with Washington the conflict over the blockade of Aqaba. Time thus becomes a crucial factor, leaving little choice for the Arab negotiating parties to get their cooperation and coordination act together.

It is a solid contention that the PLO could have struck a more favourable deal for itself had it remained in tune with the other Arab parties before and during the Oslo and Cairo accords. As such, there can be no better timing to reinstitute joint Arab efforts than now.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A COLUMNIST in Sawt Al Shabah daily drew the concerned authorities attention to the plight of 170 workers who he said have been arbitrarily fired from the Jordanian National Canning Company and the 18 workers who were earlier sacked from the Jordan Dairies Company. The workers in this country have no one to protect them, not even the Labour Ministry, which is struggling with the grave issue of growing unemployment, said Ahmad Dabbas. The government is called on to come to the help of the workers in all private businesses because it is its duty to do so and ensure that Jordanian workers have priority over guest workers in employment, demanded Mr. Dabbas. While admitting that the question of unemployment in Jordan requires efforts at the national level, one can only hope that the Labour Ministry would at least ensure the rights of those workers already employed and guarantee their lawful rights, said the writer. Mr. Dabbas said that the Labour Ministry is expected to see to it that more jobs are created for the Jordanians unemployed and to ease the chronic issue of unemployment that has been disturbing the nation for so long.

COMMENTING ON His Majesty King Hussein's meeting with members of the Lower House of Parliament Monday, Al Ra'i daily said that the King has reiterated the fact that Jordan was never going back on its clear option for democracy, especially in light of the current disarray in the Arab World's ranks. We are determined to enhance the principles and the concepts of democracy, freedom and human rights, because they constitute the right path towards a stable nation and a brighter future, said the daily. By underlining the need for a constructive dialogue for solving issues, the King is urging Parliament members and political and social groups to cling hard to the course of democracy and to uphold the status and the roles of the executive, judicial and legislative authorities in the Kingdom, added the paper. It is a challenge for Jordan to build democracy in a dark era facing a divided Arab World, and a duty for Jordanians to work towards setting a good example for other Arab countries, added the daily. It said that the King is keen on the enhancement of democracy in a manner that would ensure a prosperous future for Jordan.

Washington Watch

Signs of discord appear in U.S.- Jewish community

By Dr. James Zogby

FOR AT least the past two decades, the mainstream of the U.S. Jewish community operated as a disciplined political force. They were largely unified in their political goals and well-coordinated in their tactics.

The three pillars that formed the base around which the major Jewish groups built their consensus were:

- Opposition to arms sales to Arab countries;
- Support for U.S. aid to Israel; and
- Opposition to the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) or any recognition of Palestinian national rights.

But events of the past four years have weakened those pillars and are threatening the consensus that forged U.S. Jewish political unity. The U.S.-Arab coalition that fought the Gulf war, the constraints on the U.S. budget, and now the Israel-PLO peace accord have all combined to create a real crisis for the leadership of the Jewish organisations. In some cases there is disarray, in other instances, turmoil.

In recent months signs of this internal discord have appeared repeatedly over such issues as U.S. President Bill Clinton's nomination of Strobe Talbott as under-secretary of state, the decision of the Clinton administration to support a U.N. resolution condemning the Hebron massacre and the Israel-PLO peace agreement.

There are a number of factors which account for each of these and other instances of discord within the American-Jewish community. They are in part a reflection of the Labour-Likud split in Israel, but there is a domestic power struggle underway as well.

A principal factor in the current difficulties has been the reemergence of the Zionist Organisation of America (ZOA) as a political power within the Jewish community.

All but dead only a few years ago, the ZOA has been given a new lease on life with the election of Morton Klein, a wealthy Philadelphia businessman, as its president.

The ZOA is, in fact, an affiliate of the Likud in the World Zionist Congress. Mr. Klein has aspirations of being a domestic political force in Jewish-American politics. So it is not surprising that he and the ZOA have begun to attack the Israeli government, the U.S. administration and the peace agreement.

What is disturbing is that their attacks have won support for the right-wing group from a number of members of Congress and several Jewish organisations. But their initial success has come at some cost. While many mainstream Jewish groups were hesitant to challenge the ZOA at first, some are now voicing their displeasure at Mr. Klein's tactics.

Part of the difficulty that many Jewish leaders have in attacking Mr. Klein and his group is that the issues that the ZOA is raising have been central for so many years to pro-Israel thinking in the U.S. It is, as one liberal Jewish leader said recently, "difficult for the community to adjust its thinking overnight. Even if (Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak) Rabin is working with (PLO) Chairman Yasser) Arafat, how do we now start lobbying for foreign aid to the PLO?"

So when Mr. Klein attacks the Clinton administration for the Talbott nomination (because of Mr. Talbott's past negative comments about Israel) or its support for a U.N. resolution (because of the resolution's mention of Jerusalem as "occupied") — he finds support from some other Jewish groups and from members of Congress who are eager to support causes favourable to pro-Israel Jewish contributors.

What complicates the picture is that in both cases the most hardline pro-Israel group in the U.S., AIPAC, has taken the opposite position on the issues mentioned above. AIPAC took these stands because they were in line with the positions of the government of Israel. Mr. Rabin's government supported the nomination of Strobe Talbott and did not strenuously object to the U.N. resolution as a necessary trade-off in the move toward peace.

AIPAC's board of directors, as previously reported in this column, are deeply divided between traditional Washington professionals and liberals on the one side, and right-wing big-money contributors on the other. At its recent convention, the AIPAC board split on the question of U.S. support for the U.N. vote. Mr. Rabin's and Mr. Clinton's interventions were sufficient to win the group's support for the U.S. stance. But when AIPAC President Steve Grossman, a pro-Labour liberal, announced the organisations' decision to support the U.S. stance, he was heavily booed by the membership in attendance.

Another more recent example of the ZOA's counter-peace strategy was in evidence in the past few weeks when a group of congressmen, at the urging of Mr. Klein, announced the formation of a Peace Accords Monitoring group (PAM). The purpose of PAM, according to a press release issued by its chairman, congressman Eliot Engel will be to "focus on assuring that the PLO lives up to its commitments, particularly in light of the fact that the United States plans to channel \$500 million in aid to the West Bank and Gaza over the next five years. Members of the PAM group will work in Congress and through the media

to call attention to both PLO violations and compliance in regard to commitments made to Israel by Yasser Arafat. "Aid from the United States must not be used to build the foundation of a terrorist haven. The PLO leadership has to understand this from the outset and take specific steps to prove their deeds will match their words."

The State Department is outraged at this effort to meddle in the peace process, as are leaders in the Labour government. But the ZOA, with its big-money supporters and its ability to play into the fears of many in the Jewish community, have now secured 15 members of Congress (with more expected to join) to become members of PAM.

At a recent closed-door meeting of the conference of presidents of major Jewish organisations, the Israeli Ambassador to Washington Itamar Rabinovich, criticised such efforts which, he held, destroy the unity and discipline of the Jewish community and which meddle in the affairs of the Israeli government.

Mr. Klein did not attend the meeting. Nor would it have made a difference if he had attended since, as several Jewish commentators said, it is precisely the intention of the ZOA to destroy the unity of the Jewish community (if that means unity in support of the peace process) and to meddle in the affairs of the Labour-led government of Israel.

At this point, several observations can be made: — AIPAC is no longer the sole pro-Israel voice in Washington. Many members of Congress would, in the past, only act on a resolution if AIPAC gave them the signal to do so. But now that AIPAC has at least come out on the record in support of the peace process, other groups like the ZOA, which

reflect the fears of some in the American-Jewish community and have the ability to direct organised money in the political process, have attained the ability to get members of Congress to do their bidding. This attack from the right has, in turn, weakened AIPAC's influence and forces the lobby to be even more cautious in its support for the peace process.

So, for the foreseeable future, it can be expected that Congress and pro-Israel forces in Washington will continue to make life difficult for the PLO and the peace process. In doing so, they will not only be running afoul of the wishes of the State Department, but even the wishes of the government of Israel.

Organised Jewish dissent against the policies of the government of Israel is not an entirely new phenomenon. During the period when Likud led the government of Israel, Americans for Peace Now regularly opposed the settlement policy (even to the point of supporting George Bush's decision to withhold the loan guarantees in 1991). But opposition from the left was never as strong as this new opposition from the right and the growing movement of Jewish opponents to the Labour government present a real problem to supporters of peace.

Many in the Jewish community place blame for this on the Labour Party itself. They note how effective Likud was during the past 12 years in courting the American-Jewish leadership and how unconcerned Labour seems to be in making an effort to win them back.

So while Jewish dissent against the government of Israel is not new, it is novel that the organised dissent is so powerful and influential (and monied). This has inhibited

some Jewish groups from being more outspoken in support of peace.

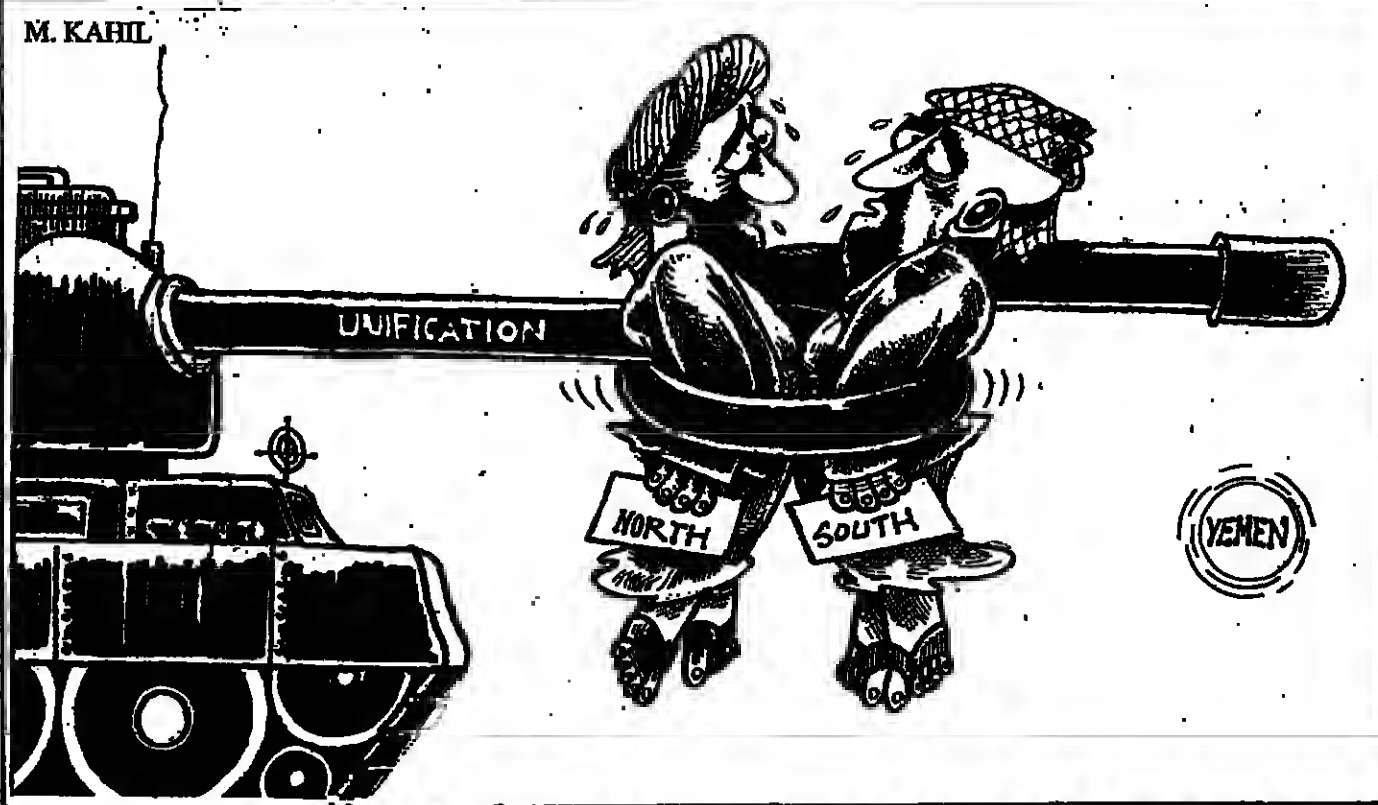
While the American-Jewish committee recently visited the Palestine Information Office in Washington and Americans for Peace Now recently sponsored a press conference with the National Association of Arab-Americans, the president of Americans for Peace Now recently said "while several American-Jewish groups have a general stance supporting the peace process, they have not put their resources behind that stance like they have done with other issues, like foreign aid and arms sales."

While Arab-Americans are struggling with the issues of peace and how to respond to the new circumstances created by the peace process, it is important to see that the same debate is also taking place within the Jewish community. Playing on old fears and muttering old slogans is always easier to do than creating realities. In politics, fear is a more effective organising force than hope.

What is clear, however, is that for peace to work, a constituency for peace must develop. In its absence and in the absence of an aggressive campaign by leaders who support peace, those who seek to take advantage of old fears will find an open playing field on which to play, and on which they will win support.

This is the challenge facing not only Arab-Americans but also Jewish-Americans. Since the power of the Jewish community is at this point greater than ours and since, correspondingly, so is their ability to disrupt or even stymie the peace process, their responsibility to support it is that much greater as well.

The writer is president of the Washington-based Arab-American Institute



'Arab unity' once more fails the test

By G.H. Jansen

NICOSIA — The civil war now being waged between North and South Yemen may seem a picaresque squabble between two countries (10-12 million people against three million) in a remote part of the world. But, in fact, what is being tested is a much bigger issue: the viability, the durability and even the desirability of Arab unity.

"Arab unity" has been like a ghost haunting the Arab World (even those two words give the impression, mistakenly, that some sort of single entity actually exists). Thus, ever since, and through the Versailles Treaty of 1919 following World War I the Western powers chopped up the Near and Middle East into client states, these countries have been trying, first, to get rid of imperial rule and, then, to unite in larger units. So there has been the United Arab Republic between Nasser's Egypt and Syria with Yemen as an appendage, that is North Yemen, until the pan-Arab Baath regimes in Syria and Iraq attempted to unite; as did Iraq and Jordan; the over-enthusiastic Colonel Muammar Qaddafi has tried to unite Libya with Egypt, Syria, Sudan and Marxist South Yemen; but none of them wanted Libya despite it oil wealth.

None of these efforts

"worked" because even if there was a form of marriage it inevitably broke up because it takes only about 10 years of separate individual national existence to produce a distinct national "personality" that is not "necessarily compatible with another national "personality". Even between close neighbours like North and South Yemen.

Yet such is the power of the Arab unity myth or ghost that not too much pessimism was expressed at the union in 1990 of North and South Yemen, unlikely partners though they were.

But it did not take very long for the southerners to discover that the northern leader Ali Abdullah Saleh, in power for 16 years, who had become the federal president, was not really interested in a friendly federal union. What he wanted was a single state dominated by the north; which the southern leader and vice-president, Ali Salem Al Beidi, was determined to frustrate. The dispute between these two men, which has become the core of the conflict, could also be said to be a dispute between two different concepts of Arab unity: should it be based on a loose, decentralised form of government or on a tightly organised and centralised one? This was the very point on which the United Arab Republic of Egypt and Syria foundered when

Damascus, wearied of and rejected Cairo's constant dictation.

President Saleh's appetite for the south was heightened when oil, even though in modest quantities, was discovered in the south but with a lot more in reserves. Sanaa naturally expected the south to share its good fortune with all the citizens of a united state while the south, equally naturally, wanted to keep most of "its" oil earnings for itself, particularly after aid from the Soviet Union came to an end. This problem of sharing resources is bound to arise in any union between two economically unequal states.

It would be particularly acute in a union with Libya, with its small population and vast oil wealth: even the most ardent feelings of Arab "brotherhood" would come under strain from national selfishness and human greed.

All these stresses were enhanced by hostility from Yemen's neighbours towards the new state, the "southern component" of which called itself "socialist" and even "Marxist"; and where, horror of horrors, a free and fair democratic multi-party election was held a year ago, with women standing as candidates.

Outside interference from hostile neighbours will always be a threat to any Arab union because settled regimes be-

come unsettled when a neighbour suddenly becomes much larger and much stronger.

The neighbour's persuasion and money produced a third force in Yemen, the Islamic Islah Party, supported by tribal traditionalists, which further confused the Yemeni political scene.

The sadly disappointed Al Beidi has suggested a friendly divorce of the two incompatible parts but President Saleh will have none of that because of the sacredness of the Arab unity concept. And in fact, it is said he is supported in wanting to continue with the united Yemen, by most Yemenis and by Arab regimes who have to render lip service to the unity ideal. After all, no one can speak out against motherhood.

President Saleh had, or has, not only emotion on his side, but why should he settle for half a loaf when he could get the whole loaf?

When the south accepted the Arab League's suggestion for a ceasefire, the north rejected it. If, however, the northern surge peters out and the battle is stalemated and long-drawn out then, perhaps, both sides will, wisely, settle for a divorce. But that would be seen as a terrible, sacrilegious betrayal of Arab unity, and a cloud of shame and dishonour, will hang over South Yemen as it did, for many years, over Syria.

Clinton wants Rao visit to improve India ties

By Carol Giacomo
 Reuter

WASHINGTON — U.S. President Bill Clinton, preparing to welcome the first Indian prime minister to Washington since 1987, is expected to focus on improving ties with the world's largest democracy and play down nuclear and rights disputes.

Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao is to visit the White House Thursday. On Wednesday, he becomes the first foreign leader to address a joint meeting of Congress since Mr. Clinton took office in January 1992.

His trip represents a public American embrace of India, a nuclear power with long-time pro-Soviet sympathies, largely made possible by the end of the cold war.

India, whose late prime minister, Rajiv Gandhi, visited Washington seven years ago, is believed to feel the U.S. invitation is long overdue. So do some influential Americans.

Strong disagreements over Kashmir and a new Clinton initiative to halt the spread of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles on the volatile South Asian subcontinent have fanned tensions between the United States and India in the past year.

The U.S. administration is hoping Mr. Rao's visit will cool those passions and foster a new relationship that encourages trade and, eventually, progress on its non-proliferation agenda.

"Accentuate the positive put things in a positive track where they belong give a chance for Mr. Clinton and Mr. Rao to get to know each other, get more focus on South Asia," one official replied when asked about U.S. goals for the visit.

"No breakthroughs. Don't expect those," he told Reuters.

In an apparent effort to promote a constructive atmosphere, the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee holds a confirmation hearing Tuesday on Undersecretary of Defence Frank Wisner's nomination to be ambassador to India. The post was open for more than a year, feeding U.S.-India ill will.

Mr. Clinton's close friend and a political heavyweight, assumed a lead role in South Asia policy, visiting India and Pakistan to press the non-proliferation initiative and improved ties.

The initiative aims to cap, reduce and ultimately eliminate India and Pakistan's nuclear programmes. It was to start with a U.S. offer to let Islamabad take possession of 38 paid-for U.S. F16 jets in return for Pakistan agreeing to a verifiable cap on its nuclear weapons programme.

The U.S. administration, in a recent report to Congress, stressed its continuing serious concerns about India and Pakistan's advanced nuclear programmes.

U.S. officials say that despite serious objections and controversy, neither government rejected the U.S. initiative flat out and both agreed to continue talking. This includes an Indian commitment to keep exploring a U.S. plan for multilateral talks on South Asian security.

But neither was the plan accepted. Some experts think the approach is fatally flawed. Others say U.S. involvement in this India-Pakistan nuclear debate is a no-win quagmire.

Although Mr. Clinton calls non-proliferation a key foreign policy goal, officials say he is not expected to press Mr. Rao on specific initiatives but to speak more generally on the need to curb nuclear arms and missiles globally. Officials say the South Asia initiative needs time and must be pursued in steps.

The United States has differed sharply with India on human rights and its treatment of separatists in the disputed territory of Kashmir. But a U.S. official, asked how prominently Kashmir will figure in Mr. Clinton's talks with Mr. Rao, said "it won't be a central issue by any means."

Despite intense U.S. efforts to stem an acrimonious media debate, news coverage of the differences between India, Pakistan and the United States over nuclear arms, ballistic missiles and Kashmir continues unabated.

U.S. officials are frustrated by what they view as distorted, even hysterical coverage by the Asian press. If Mr. Rao's visit can quiet that, Washington would consider it a major leap forward.

كلنا في اهل

South Yemen said to consider secession

(Continued from page 1)

to the southern access to the base to pick up weapons and ammunition.

In Sanaa, a northern army spokesman said Al Anad air base, which the south says has 20,000 soldiers, had been "razed to the ground and turned into a pile of ruins" since its reported capture on Monday.

The southern army units were also trying to drive the enemy away from a crossroads leading to Aden, the main port city of the south with more than half a million inhabitants.

Mr. Beidh's defence lines were spread over 17 kilometres to the south of Al Anad, bolstered by 130-millimetre batteries with a range of 30 kilometres.

Multiple-rocket launchers and anti-aircraft batteries were deployed on the sides of the main road to Aden.

The northern units, meanwhile, also fought to break through on the eastern front at Zinjibar, but Mr. Beidh's forces were holding on to their positions, 40 kilometres from Aden.

Northern forces are trying to capture southern posts along a former north-south border to protect their backs and keep supply routes open to troops preparing an assault on the southern bastion of Aden.

Northern commanders at Beihan, on the edges of the oil-producing region of Shabwa, said they took control of the city from southern forces on Sunday.

The capture of Beihan cleared part of northern forces to consolidate their hold on a former border area that was disputed before the north-south merger in 1990.

The city was calm on Monday and there were no signs of damage from the fighting.

A military source in Beihan, 240 km north of Aden, told visiting journalists northern forces were trying to capture southern posts in other border areas.

He said the aim was to "protect their back as they advance deep into the south towards Aden and to protect their supply lines from being cut off by southern troops."

Shortly before journalists arrived in Beihan on Monday, northern warplanes bombed

the city, but one northern officer said "they failed to inflict any losses."

The fighting in Beihan did not appear to have affected oil supplies from the nearby northern province of Marib or output at Shabwa's oilfields. Local commanders said Jinnah oilfields about 50 km north of Beihan were also not affected.

Journalists saw a large number of tanker trucks carrying petrol and butane gas from Safer in Marib to the capital Sanaa in the north.

Tribesmen and local military commanders said the battle for Beihan started on Sunday between the Shallah Brigade, formerly from the south, and the Mulham Brigade loyal to Mr. Beidh, when the southern forces tried to advance westwards to the northern Marib province on Saturday.

Shallah was one of seven brigades which fled to the north in 1986 during a bloody power struggle in Aden. It remained in the north and is now loyal to Mr. Saleh.

"A heavy artillery and tank battle raged until Sunday afternoon when the Mulham brigade was defeated," one northern officer said.

Neither side has issued a casualty toll for the conflict which erupted on May 5, but a southern southern leader, Salim Saleh Mohammad, said in a newspaper interview that the losses were "large and horrible."

Christopher to return to Syria

(Continued from page 1)

theme saying he hoped for a resumption of direct dialogue but admitted, "there are a lot of problems, we are at the beginning, still a long way to go."

He praised the secretary's efforts "to facilitate a real breakthrough."

Foreign Minister Shimon Peres spoke of "room for manoeuvre" with Syria.

Meanwhile Mr. Christopher, putting the U.S. seal of approval on Palestinian self-rule, visited the newly autonomous area of Jericho on Tuesday.

"I am thrilled to be here," Mr. Christopher told reporters as he entered Palestinian

At least 175 Somali refugees at a seafont camp have been killed in crossfire, according to the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees.

The fighting is still preventing the distribution of aid to some 6,000 Somalis left behind at Al Koud refugee camp, 50 kilometres from Aden, a UNHCR spokesman said in Geneva.

A senior European diplomat said southern Yemeni leaders are considering seceding from united Yemen and declaring a separate South Yemeni state amid mounting military pressure from northern civil war foes.

The diplomat said the secession option was being discussed at a meeting of the YSP political bureau late on Monday. Aides to Mr. Beidh confirmed the YSP political bureau was in session.

Some opposition political figures were also reported to be attending.

The diplomat said southern envoys and officials had been discussing possible secession with several Arab states who they suspected might be willing to recognise a new South Yemen.

The diplomat said Egypt and Saudi Arabia and its Gulf Arab neighbours have been contacted and that Russia might recognise the new state "after a few Arab countries recognise it and in consultation with the United States."

Egyptian President Hosni

Mubarak, who has tried to no avail to mediate between northern and southern leaders, has said that the seizure of Aden would be considered an occupation.

A senior southern leader warned the civil war in Yemen could lead to the creation of an Iranian-style Islamic state which would threaten its Gulf neighbours.

Salim Saleh Mohammad, interviewed by the United Arab Emirates newspaper Al Itihad, charged that Iraq and Sudan were involved in the fighting between rival army units.

"What is going on now is a tribal project supported by international Muslim fundamentalism which is seeking to establish its own state in Yemen," said the deputy leader of the YSP.

"We are not surprised by the involvement of Sudan and fundamentalist movements in supporting the project and seeking to liquidate all new bulges that took shape as a result of Yemen's unity and democracy."

Mr. Mohammad said there were large quantities of Iraqi weapons with northern troops, charging Iraq backed a military solution in Yemen. There were also Iraqi military experts in the northern republican guards and brigades.

Meanwhile the United Nations said it was negotiating with north and south Yemeni forces to evacuate 6,000 Somali refugees trapped on the front line.

Sorting out a U.S. role in U.N. operations

By Walter R. Mears
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — U.S. President Bill Clinton's blueprint for the future American role in U.N. peacekeeping operations is meant to make it effective, keep it selective and perhaps foster political peace at home.

The first two aims haven't been tested yet. The third hasn't worked.

Even though Mr. Clinton has backed away from his campaign idea of a permanent U.N. peacekeeping force, Republican critics say he's still putting too much emphasis on multinational operations.

The Clinton policy specifically rules out foreign command of U.S. forces in U.N. operations, while permitting what it terms "operational control" for specific situations and time periods. That's at issue too.

Those differences are typical of the strains affecting both U.S. and international efforts to deal with changing circumstances that are likely to require more peacekeeping missions, perhaps doubling the 18 in which U.N. forces are now involved.

The nature of these operations is changing, the U.N. undersecretary general for peacekeeping operations told a U.S. Senate foreign relations panel. Kofi A. Annan said "we've become more and more involved" in conflicts between factions within nations, because that, increasingly, is where the hostile action is.

"This makes it a particularly difficult time, both conceptually and practically, for all of us in the international community to come to grips with questions of when and how and where we will use force," Anthony Lake, Mr. Clinton's national security advisor, said in describing the administration's guidelines.

Since peacekeeping needs have outstripped resources, Mr. Lake said, there have to be hard questions asked and answered about any decision to intervene.

Under the Clinton guidelines, before the United States commits forces to a U.N. operation, the government must determine that it serves American interests, is essential to the mission, and begins with a clear objective and an end in sight.

Those are only some of the questions that would guide U.S. decisions on whether to vote for a U.N. operation, whether to participate and

under the most stringent rules, whether to join an operation in which combat is likely.

That's where peacekeeping yields to peacemaking. Mr. Annan said the dangers in blending the two were one of the painful lessons learned in Somalia, where 18 Americans were killed in a street fight with forces of a factional leader the United Nations wanted arrested.

"If you are in peacekeeping it is extremely difficult to cross the line from peacekeeping into enforcement," Mr. Annan said, "and once you've crossed the line it is extremely difficult to get back to sort of a strict peacekeeping."

"And to some extent, we are witnessing a bit of that in Bosnia," he said.

Somalia, and setbacks on Haiti, were among the experiences that tempered Mr. Clinton's early preference for a broader, stronger U.N. role.

There's also the matter of money. The United States now contributes just under 32 per cent of the cost of U.N. peacekeeping missions, although the bill is past due. Mr. Clinton wants that reduced to 25 per cent. He also wants the U.S. Congress to

appropriate nearly \$1.6 billion for the purpose for this year and next.

It is not a popular way to spend money. An earlier appropriation was shifted to pay for Los Angeles earthquake relief. By the end of September the United States will be more than \$1 billion behind in its payments to United Nations.

All of that is long term; president's most immediate problem is Haiti, and the defiant military rulers who ousted the elected president there. U.N. economic

tions have just been ended, and Mr. Clinton said he does not rule out military intervention.

Worldwide, there are out 80,000 troops involved in U.N. peacekeeping operations; less than 1 per cent are Americans. The total has gone up sharply since the end of the cold war. U.N. missions involved about 10,000 troops in 1987.

Mr. Annan said U.S. participation is important for logistics, engineering, transport — and message.

"The U.S. is a magnet," Mr. Annan said. "When you participate, others come, as we saw in Somalia. And when you leave, they leave."

Palestinians take over

(Continued from page 1)

They were scheduled to pull out overnight, but an unexpected delay left them to face the heat for another day.

"Get out of here," threatened one of the infantry men from the Givati brigade, as he moved forward slowly, gun pointing into the crowd.

But the rules have changed in the final days of the occupation compared with the routine of six years of intifada when the exchanges were less friendly. The crack of bullets would long have echoed down the street.

Meanwhile the new Palestinian police force called on Gazans to cooperate and to consider any further bloodshed as banned by the Islamic faith. In a first official statement,

police chief General Naser Yusef said: "We have before us a mission which cannot be taken lightly such as the building of our state and the raising of living standards."

"Only the maintenance of security, order and calm is likely to bring success to our mission. We ask you to cooperate with us to achieve this difficult objective."

The statement then adopted Islamic religious vocabulary, proclaiming "from this day and until eternity... any shedding of Palestinian blood is forbidden, just like renunciation of the faith."

The appeal came hours before Israeli forces were expected to complete their redeployment on the Strip, leaving the police in charge of order in all but the 20 Jewish settle-

ments of the territory.

The call came as a group of about 500 Palestinian policemen packed their bags and headed for the self-rule areas of Gaza and Jericho, some dancing and singing for joy.

Some of the men, veterans of the Palestine Liberation Army, were leaving the Ain Jalut camp on the outskirts of Cairo 20 years after they established it to provide shelter and a training ground for their struggle for liberation.

"I wish I had a rocket, not a car, to take me to my homeland and a family there," Brigadier-General Abdel-Hai Abdel-Wahed told Reuters as he prepared to lead his men to the camp in Rafah that houses Palestinian police until they start work in the self-rule areas.

Two contingents of Ain Jalut men left Egypt for Gaza and

Jericho last week and were among the first to assume control in the areas after Israel handed over power to the Palestinians as outlined by a peace accord.

The police force will stage their first joint patrols with Israeli soldiers on the Gaza Strip from Saturday, a senior member of the new force told AFP.

The patrols began in Jericho, the other autonomous enclave, last Friday, as soon as more than 400 men arrived in the West Bank town to take over from the Israelis.

Their mission is to ensure "free, unimpeded and secure movement" on roads designated important for security, including one through Jericho, part of the main north-south Gaza axis and three access roads to Israeli settlements on Strip.

Jordanian-Syrian summit

(Continued from page 1)

statement that Jordan was committed to maintain its democratisation process was in response to complaints voiced by the deputies over how the House was portrayed in the official media, particularly television.

According to parliamentary sources, Irbid Deputy Abdul Razzak Tubeisbat raised the issue of how TV coverage could instill in people's mind "the message that Parliament was being criticised for the way it handles its duties."

Parliamentary sources said that the King responded by dispelling any criticism of the

House and reiterating the Kingdom's commitment to democratisation "because it is linked to the Arab people's dignity, freedom and right to participation in building their present and making their future."

The official news agency, Petra, reported Monday that the King called on the parliamentarians to continue their distinguished work in the fields of legislation and monitoring government performance, pointing to the importance of having well-defined relations among the executive, legislative and judicial authorities.

Rabin angered

(Continued from page 1)

Muslim umma (nation)," Mr. Arafat was reported to have said in English.

"You are responsible for Palestine and for Jerusalem before me. You have to understand our meaning... our main battle is Jerusalem. The first shrine of the Muslims."

The PLO leader claimed he had held up the May 4 signing ceremony in Cairo of the autonomy implementation agreement because he wanted the fate of Jerusalem included, according to the radio report.

"And for this I was insisting before signing to have a letter from them, the Israelis, that Jerusalem is one of the items which has to be under discussion."

"I was insisting on Jerusalem," Mr. Rabin said. "There is no such letter by me or any Israeli."

After the ceremony in Cairo, Israeli officials said Mr. Arafat had refused to initial a map outlining the size of the Jericho enclave.

Israel has declared Jerusalem its united, eternal capital since co-opting the Arab eastern sector in the 1967 Middle East war.

Arafat was reported to have said on the tape that Jerusalem was "not their capital, it is your capital." He repeatedly stressed the importance of holding talks on the fate of Jerusalem within three years.

Hamas claims

(Continued from page 1)

Hebron Mayor Mustafa Natche accused the settlers of shooting for 40 minutes before soldiers turned up. He demanded the curfew be lifted. "There is no reason why the Palestinian people should be punished for the actions of settlers," he told state radio.

International observers stationed in Hebron to try to improve security for the Palestinians in the aftermath of the mosque massacre said they were also carrying out an inquiry into the shootings.

The PLO said after the clashes that Jewish settlements should be removed from all Palestinian cities to protect the peace process.

"This confirms... (PLO Chairman Yasser) Arafat's fears about the presence of armed extremist settlers in Palestinian cities," Mr. Arafat's adviser Marwan Kanafani told Reuters.

"The PLO demands that... Jewish settlements and settlers be removed from all Palestinian cities, not only to protect Palestinian lives and properties, but also to protect the peace process we all want to preserve," he said.

He said the PLO called on the co-sponsors of the peace process, Washington and Moscow, and also on Europe to increase efforts in order to put an end to what he called the provocations of Jewish settlers.

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Cost of coffee climbs

its small size, Singapore's housing situation was under much less strain than that in Japan, thanks to the local government's ambitious public housing programme.

The number of Lloyd's insurance syndicates has halved since 1991 to around 170, with almost two-thirds of 1994 business in the hands of syndicates which were profitable in 1991.

Drawing of May 17, 1984

Winners of the grand prizes in the special issue: number 8/1994 of May 2, 1994

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SNOOPY: SORRY.. I CAN'T HEAR YOU WHEN THE WIND IS BLOWING!

JOHN COLE

Panel 1: A character says, "I DON'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT MY RELATIONSHIP..."

Panel 2: A character says, "...AND ANOTHER THING—", and another character responds, "FOR PETE'S SAKE, FLOYD, GIVE IT A REST."

Panel 3: A character sits on a couch, looking thoughtful, with a large speech bubble saying, "SHE LEADS A FULL LIFE SPENDING ALL EVENING TELLING ME ABOUT HER WORKMATES AND ALL DAY TELLING HER WORKMATES ABOUT ME."

NEVER MIND!
I'LL LET
HIM SWIM
OVER!

U.S. POST OFFICE

1 Flyer	35 ordinary	50 Sculptured piece	57 Kind of school labor.
2 On the briny	36 Reasonable	52 — Haute	
3 Shish kabob	36 Norse god		
4 meat	39 Relief intervals		
4 Fuss	42 Horse feeding		
5 Zlich	44 Ham		
6 Tributary	44 Aromatic oil		
7 Merited	48 Region		
8 Event.			

FORECAST FOR WEDNESDAY MAY 18, 1994

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES:

Some important pending decisions can be made at this time.

Don't travel far from home.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Associates are likely to be demanding today so try to cooperate with them and avoid arguments. Keep calm with everyone.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Try to be more cooperative with fellow associates and improve

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21)
Don't get involved in any expen-

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Don't irritate anyone at

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) You have to exercise great care in

VIRO: (August 22 to September 22) Do not let your emotions lead you into a hasty decision today to avoid possible accident. Do nothing that could harm your good name and reputation.

ber 22) Study your duties well and then handle them in a most are soon behind you where you get on to other things. -

THE Daily Crossword by Stanley B. Weiss

ACROSS

- 1 Hermitage
- 5 Elegante, in a way
- 9 Dancer Duncan
- 10 Foodstuff
- 11 factory
- 17 More distant
- 18 Fortress
- 19 Apply lightly
- 20 Poisonous herb
- 22 Summer on the Seine
- 23 Motorcycle riders
- 24 Staircase item
- 26 Colorado ski resort
- 29 Fried of trout
- 31 Hums
- 33 Most facile
- 37 Fencer's sword
- 38 Hippodrome
- 40 Brilliance
- 41 colorad fish
- 43 Rust
- 45 Certain
- 46 American

Yesterday's Puzzle Solvers:

[illegible]

Iraqi dinar hits record lows against the dollar

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraq's dinar currency is sinking and prices rising to record highs, making it even harder for ordinary people to obtain foodstuffs and other essentials.

The dinar hit a record low of 400 to the dollar Monday as money dealers realised the United Nations had no intention of easing punitive sanctions at the root of Iraq's hardships.

Two weeks ago the dollar fetched 300 dinars.

Officially one Iraqi dinar is still valued at \$3.20. But, with the shortages and chaos following the Gulf war, it collapsed to a value about one-thousandth of its earlier level.

Traders said the dinar firmed a bit Tuesday, standing at about 370 to the dollar but with no visible effect on prices.

"Prices only react when the dollar goes up. They rarely edge down when the dinar firms," one trader commented.

Prices of consumer goods have been rising as Iraqis prepare for their Muslim feast of Eid Al Adha next weekend. Markets traditionally vibrant just before the Eid remain depressed.

"Who can buy a pair of shoes for 1,500 dinars? A frustrated shoe trader asked.

"People care about essen-

tials, particular food and medicines," a shopkeeper observed.

Food prices soared in the past two weeks — meat from 190 to 300 dinars a kilogramme, a tray of 30 eggs from 290 to 365, cooking oil from 200 to 350 a litre.

The shortages driving up prices cannot end until the United Nations Security Council rules that Iraq has met all demands the sanctions were designed to impose, including permanent curbs on its arms industry.

The Security Council is due this week to conduct a routine 60-day review of its sanctions

against Iraq. No changes have so far been made and none is expected this time.

Lifting the ban on Iraq's oil exports — more than three million barrels per day before sanctions and probably with a much higher potential — would produce a flood of dol-

lars. That should send the dinar back up, although not to levels seen before the war over Kuwait.

The ordinary Iraqi's only solace comes from government food rations, sold at nominal prices. Low-income workers also have access to government

stores providing food and essential items at prices far below the open market.

Rations cover at most 70 per cent of needs, leaving the rest to be bought at market prices. Salaries have risen, but at nowhere near the rate of inflation.

Iran creates new trade zone on Caspian Sea

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran has declared a port city in the Caspian Sea a free-trade zone, the official news agency IRNA reported. The decision was announced by President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani Monday, during a tour of Bandar-e Anzali, it said.

IRNA said the city in northern Gilan province had a potential to serve as a "key trade link to other countries bordering the sea" — namely

Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Russia.

Bandar-e Anzali is the fifth region in Iran to be declared a free-trade zone after Qeshm and Kish (on the Gulf), Chah-Bahar (on the Oman Sea) and Sirjan in the southern Kerman province.

The Iranian parliament voted last year to set up special social, customs and trade regulations to govern the zones, and it also called for a lax visa

requirement for foreigners.

But it did not say whether foreign investors were allowed to own more than 49 per cent of any venture, as has been the rule in the mainland.

Iran set up the free-trade zones to boost exports and attract foreign investment and modern technology, but the plan has so far failed and the regions have been used as platforms for importing luxury goods.



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COUNTRY & NAME	TRADES	BUY	OPENING	CLOSING
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STATE OF JORDAN	2,254	1,500	1,500	1,500
AMMAN INVESTMENT BANK	1,166	1,500	1,500	1,500
JORDAN TRADING BANK	126,288	1,500	1,500	1,500
AMMAN JORDAN INVESTMENT BANK	24,968	1,500	1,500	1,500
JORDAN TRADING BANK	810	1,500	1,500	1,500
STATE OF JORDAN	24,968	1,500	1,500	1,500
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STATE OF JORDAN	24,968	1,500	1,500	1,500
AMMAN INVESTMENT BANK	1,166	1,500	1,500	1,500
JORDAN TRADING BANK	126,288	1,500	1,500	1,500
AMMAN JORDAN INVESTMENT BANK	24,968	1,500	1,500	1,500
JORDAN TRADING BANK	810	1,500	1,500	1,500
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U.N. force in Rwanda seeks planes and armoured vehicles

NAIROBI (R) — The U.N. force in Rwanda appealed Tuesday for planes, armoured vehicles and trucks to move reinforcements ordered by the Security Council to end six weeks of slaughter.

But officials said the 5,500 troops approved by the council Tuesday would not intervene between warring government troops and rebels and a ceasefire was essential to end a campaign of genocide.

"We welcome the decision of the Security Council for the expansion of the force in Kigali," U.N. Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR) Executive Director Abdul Kabia told Reuters by telephone.

The main consideration now is countries provide aircraft capability. We need APCs (armoured personal carriers) and we need transport," he said.

The United States has offered to ferry in new troops to the central African state and supply equipment.

The council ordered the immediate dispatch of 150 military observers and 500 troops, most of them to Kigali where

massacres began on April 6 after the killing of Rwandan President Juvenal Habyarimana.

Aid officials estimate at least 500,000 people, most members of Rwanda's Tutsi minority, have been massacred by Hutu troops, militiamen and roaming mobs with firearms, machetes and knives.

Mr. Kabia said UNAMIR hoped to bring a Ghanaian battalion up to its full strength of 800 within a week depending on planes and logistical support and to give them armoured troop carriers.

The United States wants the force to be located on Rwanda's borders away from fighting in the capital. The U.N. plans for the force is first to take Kigali Airport and distribute food to the interior.

Deployment depends on countries providing the new troops. Several African countries have offered contingents, but it was not clear when the full complement of 5,500 might be available.

"Our first priority is to secure the airport. We also want a rapid deployment force to

stop the atrocities," Mr. Kabia said.

"The new resolution... gives us the power of self defence against those threatening genocidal action. It gives us the authority not to just stand by and wait while atrocities are being committed."

He said the main aim of the new force would be to protect thousands of refugees threatened with massacre sheltering in camps and churches around Kigali and to mount patrols in the city.

The United Nations already had 470 personnel in Rwanda, the remnants of a 2,500-strong force which was deployed last year.

Mr. Kabia said both government troops and Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) rebels had promised to allow U.N. forces to evacuate refugees who wanted to leave their areas and be hoped the enlarged force would be able to stop militiamen blocking them.

"The new U.N. military force is not here to intervene in the war. The warring factions are conventional forces and are

very well armed... we seek to use the powers of persuasion, not intervention."

"We are here to help the Rwandans restore law and order and give protection to those who need protection. We aim to stop the killing," said Mr. Kabia, adding progress was being made on securing a ceasefire.

"Once the conventional forces stop fighting I think the genocide will stop. I don't think the militias will still roam the streets with the same abandon as now. We will concentrate on persuading with the deterrent of a credible force," Mr. Kabia added.

Western military analysts said the RPF appeared to be aiming to thrust from swamps into government-held areas in the south before the new U.N. peacekeeping force arrived in the country.

Travellers returning from southern border areas between Rwanda and neighbouring Burundi said guerrillas were advancing quickly towards Gitarama, seat of the rump government set up in early April.



Dismissed Haitian Prime Minister Robert Malval holds a press conference in Port-Au-Prince, during which he condemned the nomination of Emile Jomassaint as Haiti's interim president (AFP photo)

U.S. sides with Malval in Haiti dispute

WASHINGTON (R) — The United States has sided Prime Minister Robert Malval in denouncing a new military-approved government in Haiti.

It also warned that the forced repatriation over the past few days of nearly 600 Haitians picked up at sea by the U.S. Coast Guard showed Washington's continued determination to fight illegal immigration to the United States.

Mr. Malval, breaking a six-month silence with a bold act of defiance, earlier called on army chief General Raoul Cedras to resign immediately and said the military leader had disgraced his uniform and locked the country "in the darkness of night."

The White House said in a statement that it "vigorously" supported Mr. Malval's denunciation of "this travesty of constitutional process."

"We associate ourselves fully with his demands that Cedras and the other military leaders stop denying democracy and security to the Haitian people," the statement said.

"Manoeuvres such as today's announcement only strengthen our determination to see democracy restored and President Aristide returned," the White House added in response to Monday's appointment of a cabinet by the military-approved leadership.

In Port-Au-Prince, Mr. Malval also called the new government illegal and demanded that civil servants refuse to obey its orders.

He blasted the military's appointment of Emile Jomassaint as provisional president to replace the exiled Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

Mr. Jomassaint named a 12 minister cabinet that did not include a prime minister, indicating that he planned to perform those duties as well.

Meanwhile, the State Department confirmed that 586 Haitians had been stopped at sea by the Coast Guard and returned to Haiti.

This comprised 246 picked up Thursday and repatriated Friday and 340 Haitians in four boats who were picked up over the weekend, spokesman Mike McCarthy said.

Under domestic political pressure, President Bill Clinton has modified the U.S. policy of returning "boat people" directly to Haiti for high-seas screening aimed at determining legitimate claims for political asylum.

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Pakistan introduces Islamic Law to halt protests

PESHAWAR, Pakistan (R) — The government of North West Frontier Province announced Tuesday introduction of Islamic Law in a semi-autonomous tribal district to try to halt violent demonstrations that left 10 dead a day earlier.

"Governor of North West Frontier Province Major General Khurshid Ali Khan has through an order... announced the enforcement of Islamic Sharia Laws in Malakand division," a government statement said.

Pvincial officials said details of the order had yet to be worked out.

"It was perhaps issued in a hurry to defuse the tense situation," Additional Secretary for Law Said Maroof Khan said. "The details are still awaited."

A gunbattle erupted Monday between police and paramilitary and tribesmen blocking a mountain pass in Malakand to demand enforcement of Islamic Law, killing 10 people and injuring 25, officials said.

The shooting broke out when paramilitary Frontier Constabulary units moved in to remove a group of tribesmen who had blocked another mountain pass at nearby Buner as part of a six-day-old protest to demand Islamic Law for the area.

Officials said the 10 dead included two Frontier Constabulary troops.

More than 20,000 Pakistani tribesmen, most from the semi-autonomous tribal areas in the North West Frontier Province, have blocked the Malakand Pass since Wednesday to demand enforcement of Islamic Law in the Malakand Agency.

Officials in Peshawar said the demonstrators had tried to extend their road blockade to the Buner Pass — the only other route to four northern districts, prompting the paramilitary to clear the road.

The tribesmen were still blocking the road early Tuesday, despite the introduction of Islamic Law, and eyewitnesses reported a heavy police presence.

Spokesmen said Monday many tribesmen were ready to die for their cause and others had sworn to divorce their wives if they failed in their objective.

"Sharia or shahadat (Islamic Law or martyrdom)," the men chanted as they sat on the road Monday.

Sooft Mohammad, a local clergyman leading the protest, told Reuters that the protesters had taken an oath that they would return home with Sharia Law or would be buried at the site.

The movement to introduce Sharia Law in the Malakand Agency was prompted by a Supreme Court decision on Feb. 12 to scrap British colonial laws that had been in force in the provincially administered tribal area for more than a century.

Provincial Law Secretary Salim Khan said the Supreme Court decision had created a vacuum in Malakand Agency. The province also contains tribal federally administered tribal agencies where Pakistani law still does not apply.

China dissident detained after U.S. TV interview

BEIJING (R) — Beijing police Tuesday broke up an interview between prominent Chinese dissident Wang Dan and two American journalists and detained them all for a short time, Mr. Wang and the news-men said.

Debate is intensifying in Washington over China's human rights practices in the final two weeks before President Bill Clinton decides whether to revoke Beijing's low-tariff trade privileges on rights grounds.

Ironically, Mr. Wang had just told the NBC News crew that he supported an unconditional extension of China's most favoured nation status.

"This has been my position all along," Mr. Wang told Reuters by telephone after his one-hour detention. "There are all kinds of other ways to deal with human rights questions."

Mr. Wang said the incident probably reflected official efforts to restrict news-gathering by foreigners in coming weeks. Mr. Clinton's deadline is on June 3 and June 4 is the fifth anniversary of Beijing's crushing of pro-democracy protests.

"They told me for about an hour, mainly to question me about how the interview was arranged, things like that," Mr. Wang said.

"This is not so much a problem for me as it is a problem for you reporters. I will not refuse to give interviews to anyone," NBC News correspondent

Lucky Severson told Reuters his crew had been taping for an hour when police arrived and detained them for several hours apart from Mr. Wang.

Police confiscated their passports, press cards and videotape and made Mr. Severson sign a statement that he would "accept the consequences" if he reported the interview. "I told them I couldn't well use tape I didn't have," Mr. Severson said.

Mr. Wang founded the Beijing Autonomous Students' Federation during the 1989 demonstrations, landing him top of a nationwide most-wanted list after troops crushed the protests.

He was arrested, sentenced to four years in prison for counter-revolution and paroled in February 1993, six months before his sentence was to expire.

Mr. Wang said he has completed an additional sentence of a year's deprivation of political rights and was free to continue speaking his mind.

China has released several other dissidents before Mr. Clinton's MFN decision, most notably Wang Juntao and Chen Ziming — the purported "black hands" behind the 1989 movement who were imprisoned for 13 years for counter-revolution.

But Beijing plans to prosecute veteran critic Wei Jingsheng, regarded as the father of China's modern Democracy Movement, for meeting the U.S. government's top human rights envoy.

Fragile ceasefire holds in Karabakh

MOSCOW (AFP) — A Russian-brokered ceasefire in the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh went into force Tuesday and appeared to be holding despite reports of isolated gunshot fire, Armenian and Azerbaijan officials said.

Military leaders of separatist Armenian forces in Nagorno-Karabakh and of the Azerbaijan Defence Ministry accused each other of staging "provocations" by opening fire but both sides claimed that they had not responded to the attacks, news agencies reported.

Defence ministers from Armenia and Azerbaijan along with leaders of Nagorno-Karabakh signed Monday in Moscow a preliminary agreement providing for a ceasefire as of midnight Monday (2000 GMT).

The agreement, which was to be finalised Tuesday, also calls for the deployment of military observers at 49 sites along the frontline as of May 24 to be followed by the arrival of 1,800 peacekeeping troops from the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

A five to 10 kilometre (three to six mile) buffer zone was to be carved along the frontline in line with the agreement which also calls for an exchange of prisoners and talks on the political status of Nagorno-Karabakh.

The latest ceasefire agreement comes after several failed attempts by Russia and the international community to end the fighting in the Armenian-populated enclave located within Azerbaijan.

At least 20,000 people have died in the six-year war — the longest running ethnic conflict in the former Soviet Union — and one million people have been displaced.

Russian officials have stressed however that, contrary to previous negotiations, Azerbaijan authorities have allowed Armenian leaders from Nagorno-Karabakh to participate in the current round of talks.

Baku has in the past maintained that the fighting over Nagorno-Karabakh was an "aggression from Armenia" and refused to recognise the demands of Armenian separatist leaders from Nagorno-Karabakh.

The ceasefire agreement comes amid reports that Azerbaijan and Armenian forces had suffered heavy casualties since fighting intensified.

Opposition divided over anti-Hata tactics

TOKYO (AFP) — Japan's Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) vowed Tuesday to topple Prime Minister Tsutomu Hata's minority government, but suddenly found that its expected allies, the Socialists, balked at the attack.

LDP Secretary-General Yoshiro Mori reaffirmed the party's intention of submitting a no-confidence motion against Mr. Hata's cabinet after the passage of a long-pending state budget.

"It is not a cabinet reflecting the popular will," Mr. Mori told a news conference. "When the budget is passed, the cabinet's duty will be over."

But the Socialists, the second biggest opposition force, gave Mr. Hata a breathing space by refusing to join the LDP in seeking an immediate resolution to fire a key parliamentary official from the ruling coalition.

The official, Keiwa Okuda, is chairman of the House Management Committee. His job is to decide whether to accept no-confidence motions and thus gives Mr. Hata's government freedom of manoeuvre.

The LDP wanted to take over the post to region control over parliamentary business. But some Socialists, traditional LDP foes, felt it unjust to fire Mr. Okuda who has made no mistakes in the job.

The conservative LDP, which lost its scandal-tainted 38-year grip on power last year, and the Social Democratic Party (SDP), as the Socialists are known, together control 280 seats in the 511-seat lower house.

The LDP secretary-general admitted that his party and the SDP had yet to agree completely on jointly submitting a no-confidence motion against Mr. Hata. "But both parties share the view that the Hata cabinet has no duty other than to pass the budget," Mr. Mori said.

SDP Chairman Tomiichi Murayama said the party would shelve its decision on whether it will join the resolution against Mr. Okuda. "We will take time to study the matter cautiously," he told reporters.

Mr. Hata took office at the head of Japan's first minority government in four decades on April 28 as the SDP, grouping a wide range of Socialists, bolted the nine-month-old ruling coalition following the creation of a rival voting bloc.

A financial scandal over Mr. Hata's predecessor, Morihiro Hosokawa, combined with infighting within the coalition over policy differences, has delayed the passage of the state budget, now six weeks overdue.

It took two weeks for the coalition to choose a successor to Mr. Hosokawa, the head of

the conservative Japan New Party, after he stepped down as premier.

Mr. Hosokawa still faces a growing call from the opposition to testify in parliament on a 100-million-yen (\$950,000) loan he allegedly received from a mobster-linked trucking czar when he was an LDP deputy running for a provincial governorship.

Meanwhile, Mr. Hata called on LDP chief Yobei Kono and secured his support for the passage of the budget as the lower house Budget Committee prepared to resume debate, party officials said.

But Mr. Kono reminded Mr. Hata that his government was a "minority government created under abnormal circumstances," according to the officials.

Mr. Hata also met the Socialist chairman separately, seeking his help for the passage of the budget.

But the premier denied he had sought the SDP's return to the coalition. "We have yet to take up the matter," he said.

Two key coalition parties, Mr. Hosokawa's Japan New Party and the centrist Democratic Socialist Party, asked Mr. Hata Monday to disband the voting bloc, Kaishin (Renovation), to lure back to the SDP which now has a casting vote in parliament.

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Haldeman diary shows Nixon concern on Jews, media

WASHINGTON (R) — President Richard Nixon's Chief of Staff H.R. Haldeman told in his diaries aired Monday night of Mr. Nixon's concern about Jewish "domination" of the media and of the problem of communicating with blacks.

The diaries, part of a nearly one-million-word record of Mr. Haldeman's service in the Nixon White House, are being featured on ABC Television news' Nightline programme.

Mr. Haldeman was Mr. Nixon's closest aide until he was forced out by the Watergate scandal that cost Mr. Nixon his presidency in 1974. Mr. Haldeman died last November at his home in Santa Barbara, California. Mr. Nixon died on April 22.

In an excerpt from a tape from Feb. 1, 1972, Mr. Haldeman said: "There was considerable discussion of the terrible problem arising from the total Jewish domination of the media and agreement that this is something that would have to be dealt with."

"(Reverend Billy) Graham has the strong feeling that the Bible says there are Satanic Jews and that's where our problem arises."

Rev. Graham said in a statement that Mr. Haldeman's words had been wrongly attributed to him and that the quote "goes against all that I believe about Jewish people."

"Those are not my words and this does not reflect the high view I hold for the nation of Israel and for Jewish people — many of whom are my close friends."

"I do not recall such a meeting or conversation. I have never talked publicly or privately about the Jewish people, including conversations with President Nixon, except in the most positive terms."

Menem: If Nazi must be extradited, why not Thatcher?

BUENOS AIRES (R) — President Carlos Menem has said that if Argentina can extradite an ex-Nazi SS officer to Italy, then former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher could be extradited for the sinking of an Argentine warship in the Falklands War.

"If it was a war crime, much as I respect her, we would have to request Margaret Thatcher's extradition," the private Dyn News Agency quoted Mr. Menem as saying.

He likened the case to that of a former Nazi officer who is being extradited from Argentina.

"If the extradition of former SS officer Erich Priebke is being requested... (for) a war crime, so was the sinking of the cruiser General Belgrano and in that case Argentina should request the extradition of former British Prime Minister Thatcher," the Independent news agency quoted Mr. Menem as telling a news conference.

The torpedoing of the Argentine cruiser as it steamed away from a British exclusion zone around the Falkland Islands claimed 323 lives among its crew of 1,093.

Britain's embassy in Buenos Aires said the sinking — one of the most debated incidents of the war — had not been a war crime and dismissed talk of Lady Thatcher's extradition.

"We do not believe the sinking of the General Belgrano was a war crime," a spokesman said. "Therefore the question of the extradition of Baroness Thatcher is not something we would expect to arise."

Clinton foreign policy losing support — poll

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — Public confidence in President Bill Clinton's handling of international affairs has declined sharply following setbacks to his Haiti policy and criticism of other initiatives, according to a new poll.

In the poll, conducted by the Washington Post/ABC News and published Tuesday, only 40 per cent of those interviewed approved of Mr. Clinton's handling of foreign policy, with 53 per cent saying they disapproved.

It was the lowest rating Mr. Clinton has received since a disastrous raid in Somalia last fall resulted in the deaths of 18 American soldiers, the Post reported.

Of those surveyed, 13 per

cent said Mr. Clinton had a clear foreign policy, with 37 per cent saying he lacked one and fully half saying they had no opinion, the poll showed.

Mr. Clinton's overall approval rating also fell from 57 per cent in March to 51 per cent, with men giving the president a lower rating than women, the Post said.

The newspaper reported that Mr. Clinton came off badly in comparison with his immediate predecessor. Half of those surveyed said he was doing a worse job on foreign policy than George Bush, while 28 per cent said he was doing a better job.

The poll was based on telephone interviews with 1,523

adults and was conducted on May 12-15. The margin of error is plus or minus three percentage points.

In other issues, Mr. Clinton also fared badly: Those who believed he has the honesty and integrity to be president fell to 56 per cent from 65 per cent in March, and his health care plan got an approval-disapproval rating of 44-50 per cent.

But Mr. Clinton's credibility got a boost with the sexual harassment suit filed against him by former Arkansas civil servant Paula Jones: 35 per cent do not believe her allegations against only 17 per cent who do — the rest had no opinion.

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Oldest piece of human bone found in Europe

LONDON (R) — British archaeologists have uncovered what is believed to be the oldest fragment of human bone discovered in Europe, the Times newspaper reported Tuesday. The limb fragment was found together with animal bones in the Boxgrove area in southern England, known to have been inhabited in the old Stone Age. The Times said tests on the fragment had shown it was about half a million years old, making it around 100,000 years older than any other European human remains. The find, due to be officially announced next week, is likely to be classified as "archaic homo sapiens" said the newspaper.

Tonys passionate about Stephen Sondheim

NEW YORK (R) — Stephen Sondheim's musical Passion topped the list of Tony nominations with a total of 10, pitting it against the Disney Company's first foray into Broadway, Beauty And The Beast, for best musical. Sondheim, whose intimate, chamber opera recently opened to strong reviews after reports of walkouts during previews, had the last laugh as his show about a military officer torn between love for a married beauty and the obsessive devotion of a baggard, sickly woman also scored nominations for Best Score, Best Book and Leads. Jere Shea and Donna Murphy, Sondheim's collaborator James Lapine received two nominations, for Best Book and Best Direction. "Disney's Beauty And The Beast and a hit revival of the 1960s musical She Loves Me trailed close behind Passion with nine nominations apiece. Beauty scored for Best Musical, Best Book and Score, along with nods for leads Terrence Mann and Susan Egan. She Loves Me scored nominations for Best Musical Revival and leads Boyd Gaines and Judy Kuhn, as well as Best Direction. On the drama side, Tony Kushner's Angels In America: Perestroika, his follow-up to last year's Millennium Approaches which won a fistful of Tonys including Best Play, led the pack with six nominations including Best Play, Best Actor for Stephen Spinella, who won a Tony playing the same character last year, and Best Director for George C. Wolfe. Other Best Play nominees included Arthur Miller's Broken Glass, about a Brooklyn woman's hysterical paralysis during the early Nazi era, The Kentucky Cycle, a seven-hour exploration of generations of an American family which had a brief run, and Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992.

Pro-life movement born in Russia

MOSCOW (AFP) — Russia's emerging pro-life movement holds its first conference here this week to map out a strategy to curb the abortion rate, which is among the highest in the world, the president of the Right To Live Organisation said Tuesday. Galina Sieryakova told AFP that the three-day conference beginning Wednesday would allow the Russian anti-abortion movement to recruit new members in cities and towns across the country and to launch an information campaign against abortion. "After more than 70 years of communism, women must know that abortion is not something normal," Ms. Sieryakova said. One out of every four abortions in the world are performed in Russia, according to the organisation's estimates and Russian women on average have at least four abortions in their child-bearing years. Abortion is widely used in Russia as the main method of contraception and other means of birth control are expensive and scarcely available. Ms. Sieryakova said the Right To Live Movement, which was founded in 1992 with 20 members, now had over 1,000 members, most of whom were active in Moscow, St. Petersburg and in the Siberian city of Novosibirsk.

Rape suspect held in France

PARIS (AFP) — French police have arrested a 24-year-old man who confessed to raping 15 girls between the ages of six and 13 over the past year, authorities said. The suspect, identified as Christophe Guiboud-Ribaud, was detained Friday as he left a restaurant in a Paris suburb. The owner of the restaurant recognised him from a police composite sketch and called the authorities. The suspect blamed his behaviour on being raped when he was 12.

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Teams seek changes to World Cup kick-off times

LONDON (R) — Ireland, the Netherlands and Belgium are to put pressure on FIFA to change the midday kick-off times of World Cup soccer games in Florida, according to British newspapers.

They even have the support of Belgium doctor Michel D'hooghe, head of FIFA's medical committee who reportedly will plead his case to switch from the debilitating heat to a cooler evening kick-off during a meeting of the World Cup organising committee in Zurich, Thursday.

The Tuesday editions of the Sun and Today newspapers report D'hooghe as saying: "The 12.30 kick-off times worry me. The first game is a combination of heat and humidity, which leads to dehydration for the players."

"During the meeting Thursday I will make my concerns clear and ask if it is possible to make changes," the papers quoted him as saying.

But FIFA press officer Guido Tognoni told Reuters Monday that the times could not be altered because television schedules have already been drawn up.

"There is no way the kick-off times for the matches in Orlando can be altered," said Tognoni.

FIFA decided all games in Orlando, featuring teams from groups E and F, should start around noon to avoid the regular mid-afternoon and evening lightning storms that plague the region.

The first game in Orlando is on June 19 between Belgium and Morocco.

S. Korea including foreign-based talent in its World Cup squad

SEOUL (R) — South Korea has decided to rely on two foreign-based talents to help them achieve their first victory at the World Cup finals, a soccer official said Tuesday.

The official at the Korea Football Association (KFA) said soccer officials agreed at a meeting Monday to include Kim Joo-Sung in Germany and Noh Jung-Yoon in Japan as South Korea's World Cup members.

South Korea will announce their final World Cup list Sunday.

"It was decided that the two

players would be needed to boost the team's strength, and help us achieve our goal of reaching the final 16," said the KFA official.

Kim, Asian footballer of the year in 1989, followed 1986 veteran Cha Bum-Keun into the German Bundesliga and is now with second division Bochum.

South Korean soccer officials were expected to leave for Germany to watch Kim play this week, and discuss plans to bring him in.

The midfielder, a veteran of the 1980 World Cup in Italy

and last year's Asian qualifiers, has been criticised for weak performances in the national side.

But head coach Kim Ho pushed for Kim's entry saying that his international experience would boost the team's confidence.

The flamboyant 28-year-old midfielder has the skill to break through apparently solid defences and create chances.

Noh, who also played in last year's Asian qualifiers, and is now in the J-League is expected to arrive in Seoul Thursday.

Tennis star Jennifer Capriati arrested on drug charges

CORAL GABLES, Florida (AFP) — Former American tennis star Jennifer Capriati was charged with being in possession of marijuana here Monday after police found her in a hotel room after being tipped off about a "runaway" being there.

After being charged, the 18-year-old former world top-ten player was released to her attorney John Ross.

Police officer Mitch Fry said that Capriati was found alone in the room and a search uncovered the marijuana. Shortly afterwards a 17-year-old reported runaway girl and a 19-year-old man pulled up outside the hotel in Capriati's car.

They were also arrested on drug charges.

The girl, alleged to be in possession of two packets of heroine, was later released to her parents.

The man, Tom Wineland of Key Biscayne, was suspected of having crack cocaine and was being held on a \$6,000 bond at Dade County Jail.

It is the second time in less than a year that Capriati, who became the youngest player ever to win a match at Wimbledon in 1990 and who reached the semi-finals there the following year, has been in trouble with Florida police.

Last December she was accused in Tampa of shoplifting but let off with a warning. Her



Jennifer Capriati shown in a Coral Gables Police Department photo

year's United States Open, earned \$1.5 million in prize money after turning professional in March 1990.

She reached a highest-ever ranking of sixth in 1991, reached three semi-finals and six quarter-finals in 14 Grand Slam events and beat Steffi Graf in three thrilling sets in the 1992 Olympic final in Barcelona.

Capriati officially left the tour because of an elbow injury but many felt she was showing classic signs of "burn-out."

In January she made it clear she did not intend to return to the game until she graduated from high school and despite a statement in March from her father and coach, Stefano Capriati, who said she might stage a return for the forthcoming French Open, it was quickly clear Capriati herself was not enthusiastic about the idea.

The current issue of Sports Illustrated quotes Capriati as saying: "I'm having fun."

The magazine said it interviewed her at Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton and that Capriati had said she had left her parents to live with friends.

"It's better with them than up where I was living," she is reported as saying.

Capriati's agent made no immediate comment after hearing Monday's news.

Canada entices WC teams

NEW YORK (R) — Six of the 24 World Cup finalists will prepare for the month-long tournament in neighbouring Canada, World Cup officials said Monday.

World champions Germany, Brazil, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Morocco and Bolivia, have all scheduled matches in Canada to help them acclimatise before heading for their official training camps in the United States.

All 23 teams have advised the World Cup organisers of their tentative arrival dates, with some reporting to their designated training sites as much as 20 days in advance of the required date.

Five teams, Bulgaria, Greece, Saudi Arabia, South Korea and Sweden, have decided to hold preparation camps away from their official training sites and will not re-

port to their quarters until much closer to the time they have to arrive — five days before their opening fixture.

Saudi Arabia will be the first team to reach the U.S., arriving Tuesday for a preparation camp near Atlantic City, New Jersey, before making for their training site near Washington D.C.

Germany will spend a week near Toronto, during which time they will play Canada, before reporting to Chicago June 13, five days before the opening game of the World Cup against Bolivia.

Brazil arrive in the United States May 26 before moving to Canada June 3 for a match against the Canadians two days later.

Morocco and the Netherlands also have games scheduled against Canada.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Australia replace Argentina in Japan

SYDNEY (R) — Australia answered Tuesday a late invitation from Japanese soccer officials by organising a squad to replace Argentina in a three-nation tournament later this month. Argentina withdrew in protest last week following the Japanese government's refusal to issue Diego Maradona an entry visa because of a drug conviction. Tournament organisers turned to Australia Friday, giving coach Eddie Thomson less than four days to put together his 16-man squad. "I've been flat out finding out who is available at such short notice," Thomson said. Australia's first opponents in the Kirin Cup will be hosts Japan in Hiroshima Sunday followed by France in Kobe May 26. The Australian squad will leave for Japan Thursday.

Belgium omit Brazil striker

BRUSSELS (AFP) — Belgian coach Paul Van Himst has omitted Brazilian-born Luis Oliveira from his World Cup squad because he thought the player would disrupt team unity. Oliveira, who plays for the Italian side Cagliari, recently criticised Van Himst and some of the players. Croatian-born Josip Weber, whose 31 goals for Cercle Bruges made him the leading scorer in Belgium for the third year running, is called up a month after becoming a Belgian citizen. Bruges defender Pascal Renier, who marked his opposing forward out of the game in every important league match this year, and his club goalkeeper Dany Verlinden are two other uncapped players. Michel de Wolf, 36, is going to his third finals. "He's still the best sweeper in Belgium," Van Himst said. He picked seven players each from champions Anderlecht and runners-up Bruges.

Clippers fire Weiss as head coach

LOS ANGELES (R) — The Los Angeles Clippers Monday fired head coach Bob Weiss after just one season on a three-year contract. General Manager Elgin Baylor said the club has begun a search for a successor. He said assistant coaches Dave Wohl, Johnny Davis and Bob Ociepka will be retained until a new coach determines their status. The Clippers made a blockbuster trade with Atlanta this past season, getting All-Star forward Dominique Wilkins in a deal for Danny Manning. But the Clippers still finished last in the Pacific Division with a 27-55 record, 36 games behind first-place Seattle.

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Jordan Times Tel: 667171

Marseille face debt inquiry

MARSEILLE, France (AFP) — Olympique Marseille's future was placed in the hands of an examining magistrate by a commercial court here Tuesday after it heard the club had debts of 404 million francs (\$70 million).

Accounts for the 1992-93 season showed debts of 404 million francs and operating losses of 123 million francs (\$22 million) which left a net deficit of 67 million francs (\$12 million).

Club President Bernard Tapie claims the debts can be covered by the sale of players and he can personally guarantee the 67 million francs. Tapie has appealed against his life ban from the sport for his alleged part in a match-fixing scandal which led to Marseille being demoted to the second division.

Bernard Nouaille has been appointed to check the club's accounts. If he reports the club is in cessation of payments it will be wound up.

The French league's financial watchdog, the DNCG, was to rule by the end of the month on whether Marseille could sign any new players for next season.

Brazilian forward Sonny Anderson da Silva, on loan from Servette Geneva, will almost certainly leave Marseille, the Swiss champions said.

Juventus of Italy have already bid \$10 million and French clubs Monaco and Bordeaux are also interested.

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ANSWERS TO WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

- Q.1—As South, vulnerable, you hold:
♠1097 ♣A10973 ♦K106 ♣K
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1 ♠ Pass
2 ♠ Pass
3 ♠ Pass
What action do you take?
A.—If you elected to pass because you have only two hearts, you have misunderstood the auction. Partner almost surely has a six-card heart suit, so your doubling guess is a golden support. Since you have a maximum no-trump response, you should raise to three hearts.
- Q.2—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠K ♣QJ98742 ♠65 ♠Q10
Partner opens the bidding with one no trump. What do you bid now?
A.—Should you jump to three hearts and then correct three no trump to four hearts, you are suggesting a heart interest and no way in this hand good enough for such action. Jump directly to four hearts or, if you play transfer bids, take that route as quickly possible to game.
- Q.3—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠A4 ♣Q974 ♠865 ♠Q73
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1 ♠ 1 NT Pass
2 ♠ Pass
What do you bid now?
A.—You have already shown a balanced hand of 10-10 points, so don't repeat yourself. Since you have no idea how strong partner is, or where you are headed, for the moment all you can do is take a preference to two diamonds.
- Q.4—East-West vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠Q86 ♣A682 ♦K32 ♠86
Partner opens the bidding with one no trump. What do you respond?
A.—This is the hand for a jump to three hearts in standard methods. Whether partner rebids three no trump or raises to four hearts, pass. If you play transfer bids, transfer into hearts and then jump to three no trump to show a balanced hand of 10-14 points and a five-card heart suit.
- Q.5—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠QJ642 ♠8 ♠J8432 ♠Q2
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1 ♠ 2 ♠
What action do you take?
A.—Your hand has value only at a spade contract, because your spade length detracts from partner's defensive potential. Jump to four spades. That's preemptive, with a strong hand you would first cue-bid diamonds.
- Q.6—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠AQ85 ♣J ♠K43 ♠Q743
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1 ♠ 2 ♠ Pass 3 ♠ Pass
What do you bid now?
A.—Your hand has gotten better by leaps and bounds and it doesn't need all that much from partner to be in the slam zone. Nevertheless, you still have a minimum opening bid and unless partner can make another move, we would be content with game. For the moment, we would simply bid four clubs, to confirm four-card support.

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France to pull troops out of Bosnia

SARAJEVO (R) — France said Tuesday it will pull 2,500 peacekeeping troops out of the former Yugoslavia by the end of the year as nations increased pressure to end the fighting in Bosnia.

International mediators Lord Owen and Thorvald Stoltenberg flew to Belgrade Tuesday to discuss a new international peace initiative with Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic.

Russia's special envoy Vitaly Churkin said Monday night after talks with Mr. Milosevic that carrying out the new peace plan formulated by foreign ministers in Geneva now had priority.

Ministers from Russia, the United States and the European Union called last Friday for a temporary ceasefire and new negotiations to start within weeks.

But there has been little sign of progress with the war in its third year and hundreds of thousands of dead and wound-

ed. United Nations officials are trying to arrange a meeting of Serb and Muslim commanders to discuss the truce.

The Serbs and Muslims have both raised objections, the Muslims saying a four-month truce would be too long and the Serbs saying it is too short, and have stepped up fighting.

Exasperated French leaders, trying to force a start to the peace process, said they had already started withdrawing French troops out of the former Yugoslavia.

"We have started the process of withdrawing a number of battalions... Before the end of the year there will be about 2,500 fewer French soldiers in former Yugoslavia," Defence Minister Francois Leotard told Europe 1 radio.

France's 6,000 peacekeeping troops in former Yugoslavia form the largest contingent in the U.N. Protection Force.

Britain has also hinted it may recall its troops if the

parties to the conflict refuse to make peace.

French Prime Minister Edouard Balladur said last week that France would have to consider withdrawing unless all major powers committed themselves to a peace settlement in Bosnia.

The French statements were widely seen as an attempt to put pressure on the United States, which sees the Muslims as the aggrieved party, and the Muslim-led Bosnian government to accept a ceasefire and an ethnic carve-up of Bosnia.

U.N. officials said in Zagreb that France had not told them of its intention to withdraw some 2,500 peacekeeping troops.

Mr. Leotard said France had already begun withdrawing battalions out of Gmina in the Serb-controlled Krajina region in Croatia and the Muslim pocket of Bihać in northern Bosnia.

A U.N. spokesman said the U.N. was aware of this and it

should not be linked necessarily to a major pull-out.

Under the peace plan, the Bosnian Serbs would get 49 per cent of the former Yugoslav republic — they now hold more than two-thirds — and a new Muslim-Croat federation the rest.

European Union foreign ministers Monday backed the new drive for peace as the only realistic chance to end the war.

Fresh fighting around the northern city of Tuzla cast a shadow on international efforts to restart the peace process.

The Serb reported their forces had retaken much of the territory lost to the Muslims in five days of fighting that cost both sides many casualties.

Tuzla came under renewed shelling Monday. Two rounds landed within metres of children while they were playing. But none were hurt. The city and surrounding districts have been hit by nearly 40 shells in two days.



His Majesty King Hussein Tuesday receives a delegation from north and south Palestine which offered condolences over the passing of the late Queen Zein Al Sharaf, the Queen Mother (Petra photo)

King meets delegation from north, south Palestine

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Tuesday reiterated Jordan's continued support for the Palestinian people to enable them to regain their rights on their national soil.

"We will continue to support you with all our potentials, acting from the principles and ideas of the Great Arab Revolt," said the king in an address to a Palestine delegation from north and south of Palestine, who offered their condolences on the passing of the late Queen Zein Al Sharaf, the Queen Mother.

King Hussein said that Jordan has "no ambition or objective other than ensuring the

restoration of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people" and the establishment of a just and comprehensive peace acceptable to the future generations.

The Palestinian people, the King said, will continue to receive "our total respect and appreciation for their steadfastness and their endeavours to regain their rights." Referring to Jerusalem, he said that "the holy city with its shrines will remain in our hearts and we pledge to work at all levels and with all our might to ensure that it will be for us all."

He stressed that sovereignty over Jerusalem should be only for God Almighty.

He told the audience, at the

Royal Court, that in Jordan people adhere firmly to their national unity irrespective of origin or place of birth.

The King thanked the delegation for their visit and their expression of sympathy on the sad occasion. He requested that the delegation members convey his appreciation and thanks to the Palestinian people in the occupied lands.

Head of the delegation Hussein Sulaiman praised the historic and leading role of King Hussein, saying that "history will record such a role in letters of gold. The Arab and Islamic nations, including the Palestinian people, will not forget that you have been the supporter and defender of its just causes, Mr. Sulaiman said.

Opposition unites against Berlusconi programme

ROME (AFP) — Italian opposition parties united against Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi's political programme Tuesday, heightening the critical vote of confidence in the Senate Wednesday.

Mr. Berlusconi made a strong bid to attract the conservative vote when he presented his programme to the Senate Monday, conceding what he called "legitimate concerns" over the presence of five neo-fascists in his cabinet but pledging his right-wing coalition would adhere to Italy's democratic structures.

But he was still eight votes short of an absolute majority of the 324 senators one day before the vote.

Mr. Berlusconi was said to be hoping for backing from some of Italy's life senators after one of them, FIAT President Gianni Agnelli, announced he would support Mr. Berlusconi because he had outlined a "good" economic programme.

But barring a last-minute change, the media-tycoon-turned-politician appeared unlikely to win over his main target, members of the Popular Party, the former Christian Democrats who were Italy's long-time rulers until their credibility was decimated by the country's "clean hands" corruption probe.

Mr. Berlusconi, who announced his government last week after his three-party coalition won the March elections, needs the backing for his government from both chambers of parliament.

It has a majority in the lower chamber.

But the former Christian Democrats in the Senate made it clear that his appeal had failed to convince them — either about his programme or his cabinet.

The sole dissident in their ranks was Senator Luigi Grillo, who warned his colleagues: "We cannot run the risk of returning to the ballot box. We must allow Berlusconi to win

the vote of confidence — even if it means leaving at the moment of the vote," he said.

Observers Tuesday suggested his proposal — a technical vote to spare Italy's 53rd post-World War II government a vote of no-confidence — might provide an easy-out for some of the conservative senators.

The majority in the Senate is calculated on the number of members present for a vote and not on the total 324 senators.

But this still left the senators on the left against the government. They have denounced Mr. Berlusconi's programme as only a list of vague ideas with any concrete proposals for implementation and remain highly suspicious of the neo-fascist presence.

Berlusconi was thought to have suffered a setback Monday with the defection of Senator Gianfranco Miglio from the Northern League, one of the right-wing coalition partners.

Mr. Miglio said Tuesday he would still give his support — if not wholehearted — to the prime minister. "When you have to take a castor oil, do it quickly and then you don't have time to think about it," he said.

Analysts Monday had attributed Mr. Miglio's defection to anger at not being nominated to head the ministry of Institutional Reform in the incoming government.

Mr. Miglio Tuesday accused Northern League chief Umberto Bossi of having made federalism — the key tenant of the insurgent Northern League — "a simple alibi" to quench his thirst for power and get his party into the government.

Other than the Northern League, the coalition includes Berlusconi's Forza Italia and the National Alliance of neo-fascist Gianfranco Fini.

Mr. Bossi and Mr. Fini have warned the senators that if they fail to deliver the confidence vote fresh elections would be staged next month.

Black Sea states form peacekeeping forum

TBILISI (AFP) — Member states of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Region meeting in Tbilisi Tuesday shifted their focus from economic to security issues to try and bring about peace and stability in the troubled region.

Ostensibly an economic grouping to promote free trade and market reforms, the organisation's 11 members — Turkey, Russia, Ukraine, Romania, Bulgaria, Greece, Albania, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan — met in the Georgian capital to try and create "a mechanism for the regulation of the region's many conflicts," according to Sergei Kyushko, head of the Ukrainian delegation.

The regional peace initiative was discussed under the auspices of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Region's inter-parliamentary Legal and Political Affairs Committee.

Attention was focused in particular on the six year-old conflict over the disputed enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh, situated inside Azerbaijan but inhabited by an Armenian majority.

The head of the Armenian delegation, David Vardanyan, said that "there can be no economic cooperation until there is peace in the region" and stressed that "all possibilities must be used" in attempting to bring peace to the enclave.

But the head of the Azerbaijani delegation, Mir-Gamza Efendiyev, was more pessimistic, telling AFP: "The CSCE's (Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe) Minsk Group have spent many months trying to bring about peace in Karabakh — I do not see how one meeting in Tbilisi will solve the conflict."

Turkey, which founded the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Region in June 1992, has tried to concentrate the grouping's efforts solely on economic issues.

But under pressure from other heads of state with immediate security concerns,

such as the embattled Georgian leader, Eduard Shevardnadze, the organisation has taken on a more political colouring.

Actual and potential problems in the Black Sea region include the dispute between Albania and Serbia over Kosovo, troubled relations between Greece and Turkey, tension between Russia, Moldova, Ukraine and Romania over the self-styled Slave republic of Trans-Dniestr, the tug-of-war between Russia and Ukraine over Crimea, the bloody Kurdish struggle in southeastern Turkey, two separatist conflicts inside Georgia and the war over Nagorno-Karabakh.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Hassan meets Tunisian ministers

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Talal Sattar Al Hassan, who is on a visit to Tunisia, Tuesday met with Tunisian Minister of International Cooperation Mohammad Al Ghannouchi and discussed with him means of enhancing Jordanian-Tunisian relations. Mr. Al Hassan also met with Tunisian Minister of National Economy Al Sadeq Rabeh and Culture Minister Al Mangi Bou Seneia for talks on bilateral relations.

Mubarak never called Arafat a "dog," insists PLO

TUNIS (AFP) — The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Tuesday denied press reports that Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak had called Yasser Arafat a "dog" for delaying the signing of the May 4 self-rule accord with Israel. "It's a lie," the PLO insisted in a statement. Such reports were "part of an orchestrated campaign against the Palestinians and their leadership at a time when the Palestinian national authority is being set up" to run the self-rule areas of Gaza and Jericho. Relations between Mr. Arafat and Mr. Mubarak are marked by "respect, trust and brotherly warmth," the organisation said. The Palestinians and Egyptians had "historic links." Israeli and Western newspapers have said Mr. Mubarak lost his temper and called Mr. Arafat a "dog," ordering him to put pen to paper "at once," after the PLO chairman held up a signing ceremony for the launch of Palestinian self-rule.

Wounded U.N. soldier kidnapped in Somalia

NAIROBI (R) — A Nepalese U.N. soldier wounded in an ambush was kidnapped from a Mogadishu hospital by unidentified Somali gunmen, the Red Cross said Tuesday. The soldier was wounded and five other Nepalese peacekeepers were killed Monday while trying to stop fighting between rival Somali clan militias in lawless south Mogadishu.

Russia says Iraq sanctions should go after trial

MOSCOW (R) — Russia said on Tuesday it viewed positively Iraq's efforts to comply with U.N. demands imposed after the Gulf war and that sanctions against Baghdad should be lifted after the shortest possible trial period. The U.N. commission sent in to disarm Iraq after the war has been making so-called baseline inspections to set standards and establish basic data by which the commission can determine if Iraq respects its obligations under the ceasefire. Viktor Posavskyuk, director of the Foreign Ministry's Department of the Middle East and North Africa, told a news briefing Russia regarded positively Baghdad's efforts to comply.

Israeli jets stage mock raids near Beirut

SIDON, Lebanon (R) — Israeli warplanes staged mock air raids against radical Palestinian bases south of Beirut Tuesday, security sources said. The planes circled at low altitude over Nazmieh, 15 kilometres south of Beirut. Anti-aircraft machine-guns were fired but the planes were not hit, the sources said. Israeli planes launched several raids against bases of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine - General Command on May 10, killing three guerrillas. Israeli artillery shelled a string of villages in south Lebanon overnight, wounding a member of the pro-Syrian Amal group, the sources said.

10 children, UNICEF worker killed in Kigali

NAIROBI (AFP) — Ten children and a Rwandan woman working for the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF) were found backed to death in the woman's central Kigali home, a U.N. spokesman said Tuesday. "Civilians armed with guns, grenades and machetes entered the house and hacked the victims to death," spokesman Abdul Kabia said by telephone from Kigali. The massacre, which occurred Sunday, was reported to the U.N. Assistance Mission in Rwanda Monday, and U.N. officials went to the scene Tuesday. Mr. Kabia said, Mr. Kabia said it was unclear whether the victims were from the minority Tutsi tribe that has borne the brunt of six weeks of bloodletting in which relief officials estimate between 200,000 and 500,000 people have been butchered. Five of the victims were the UNICEF employee's children, and the others were children who had sought refuge in her home near the Belgian school from death squads roaming Kigali's streets, Mr. Kabia said.

4 killed, 116 hurt in Kabul fighting

KABUL (AFP) — At least four people were killed and 116 were wounded in a four-hour battle between rival Afghan forces fighting for Kabul, hospital sources said Tuesday. Rockets and shells rocked the capital as forces loyal to Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani defended their positions against attacking Uzbek troops, a frontline commander said. The pro-Rabbani commander said the Uzbeks launched the attack in Shour Bazar in south Kabul in an abortive attempt to push toward the city centre, firing a "hail of rockets" in advance of an infantry onslaught. On the outskirts, some 30 kilometres (20 miles) northwest, the pro-Rabbani forces clashed with the troops of Prime Minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar in Maidan Shahr early Tuesday. A soldier at the Jamburiat Hospital said an infantry regiment of Mr. Rabbani had attacked the posts of Mr. Hekmatyar's Hezb-e-Islami faction around Maidan Shahr. "We managed to capture some strategic hills in the area," he said.

Malawi takes a 'holiday' to vote

BLANTYRE (AFP) — Malawians decided to take a holiday Tuesday as the country held its first multi-party elections since independence, set to end three decades of rule by the aged President Kamuzu Banda.

Offices were deserted as long queues of voters grew outside polling stations in Blantyre, the economic capital of the small southern African nation, and most shops owned by Asians were closed, apparently for fear of looting.

"We will open after the results are announced and we are assured there is no trouble," one storekeeper, Issa Osman, told AFP as 3.8 million Malawians were called to the polls.

Shops owned by the president, of state, whose octopus-like Press Holdings conglomerate controls 30 per cent of impoverished Malawi's economy, were open and unguarded by security police.

"The government blundered not to declare May 17 a public holiday. Who can work today?" asked civil servant Ben Phiri, on his way home after voting in the centre of town.

In Ndindanda, the biggest Blantyre township perched on hills overlooking the city, crowds of voters began arriving at the schools where the voting was to take place at 3:00 a.m. (0100 GMT), three hours before the polls opened.

No trouble was reported from the polling stations. Though more than 60 per cent of Malawians are illiterate, many seemed familiar with the voting procedure after a referendum last year, which forced Banda to end the single-party rule of his Malawi Congress Party (MCP).

"We just want to vote to continue the process of change after the referendum," one voter, Kalonga Stambuli, said. "We don't care who becomes the next president so long as it's not Banda."

Mr. Banda, who officially turned 89 Saturday but is believed to be at least 93, has led Rwanda with iron-fisted paternalism since independence from Britain in 1964.

He faces three contenders for the presidency — a former aide gone into opposition; Bakili Muluzi of the United Democratic Front, trade unionist Chakufwa Chibana, who spearheaded the campaign for political pluralism in 1992 and is backed by the Alliance for Democracy, and Kampele Kalua of the Malawi Democratic Party.

A fifth candidate, Tim Mangwaza of the Malawi National Democratic Party, has pulled out of the presidential race and is fighting only for a parliamentary seat in the general elections taking place alongside the presidential poll.

Muluzi is favoured to win, but political analysts say that he is unlikely to secure an outright majority.

"We should, however, get some indication of who is winning by 12 midnight," Ndindanda returning officer Esther Msowoya said.

Shakhrai quits Russian government, warns of unrest

MOSCOW (AFP) — Deputy Prime Minister Sergei Shakhrai resigned Tuesday in protest at being replaced in the key post of nationalities minister and warned that Russia was again headed for a period of political upheaval.

"The appointment of a new nationalities minister was done without consulting me and therefore I request to be relieved of my duties as deputy prime minister," said Mr. Shakhrai, a moderate reformer who emerged over the past three years as an influential member of President Boris Yeltsin's camp.

Mr. Yeltsin appointed Nikolai Yegorov, the governor of the southern Krasnodar region, as nationalities minister Monday after Mr. Shakhrai failed to make progress in talks with ethnic leaders in the troubled Caucasus region.

The resignation of Mr. Shakhrai fuelled speculation of a possible falling out between him and other top presidential aides.

At a press conference, Mr. Shakhrai criticised Mr. Yeltsin's entourage, stating that the "situation" in the Kremlin "made it impossible to work normally."

He complained that the decision to fire him from the nationalities post, a portfolio which he kept under successive governments since December 1992, was not taken according

to normal procedures, but he did not elaborate.

Mr. Shakhrai, 38, warned that a new period of political upheaval was brewing due to the ongoing conflict between the government and the newly elected parliament and predicted that Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin would be forced to resign in August.

"In July, there will be major problems: rallies, strikes, that will involve the military and the Interior Ministry forces," he said, adding that the instability would lead to the departure of Mr. Chernomyrdin.

He also said Mr. Yeltsin would face strong opposition from the legislature in choosing a new prime minister and named three possible candidates to the post: Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov, Deputy Prime Minister Oleg Soskovets or the former chairman of the Security Council, Yuri Skokov.

"It could lead to a repeat of last October, but I am an optimist and think this will not happen," he said, referring to the violence that rocked Moscow last year when the military, put down a revolt by anti-Yeltsin leaders of parliament.

Mr. Shakhrai said his resignation did not mean that his Party of Russian Unity and Accord would join opposition forces in their battle against Mr. Yeltsin.

S. African army steps up patrols in strife-torn areas

JOHANNESBURG (R) — The South African army stepped up patrols Tuesday in Johannesburg's East Rand black townships after a meeting of police, military and community leaders to bring peace to the strife-torn area.

The Monday night meeting was organised to find ways to stabilise the satellite townships where hundreds of people have died in political and criminal violence over the past two years.

Violence is one of the urgent issues facing President Nelson Mandela's multi-party government of national unity that took office following his inauguration as first black state leader last week.

A weekend massacre of 12 people, lined up and shot in Tokoza township, has been blamed on a power struggle between "gangster" members of an African National Congress (ANC) self-defence unit.

The ANC and the army said Tokoza was calm Tuesday, a day after three other bodies were discovered near the house where the 12 were gunned down Friday night.

"Tokoza is quiet, but we are not taking any chances. We have stepped up patrols and trying to establish communications between warring factions," an army spokesman said.

The ANC set up self-defence units of young men armed with a variety of weapons at the height of political violence, saying defence was needed against a "third force" with connections in the former apartheid security forces.

Men-only workers' hostels occupied by supporters of the Zulu-based Inkatha Freedom Party added to the climate of violence, with frequent battles between the rival political forces.

The ANC spokesman for the Johannesburg provincial region, Ronnie Mamoea, said the ANC had appealed for witnesses of the massacre to come forward and was setting up liaison committees between community groups.

The execution-style killings Friday night shook South Africa and the ANC-led government at the end of a largely peaceful first week in office.

Safety and Security (Police) Minister Sidney Mufamadi said stability and security was a high priority for the government which would issue a policy statement Friday.

"Stability and security are necessary if South Africa wants to take its rightful place in the world community... All of South Africa's development plans depend on the adequate level of personal security."

"Law and order is needed to ensure stability and draw foreign investments," Mr. Mufamadi told reporters.

Police in the country's other violence-ridden area, the Zulu heartland of KwaZulu-Natal, said Tuesday at least 16 people had been killed in political and criminal violence since the start of last weekend.

Independent monitors said a state of emergency in force in the region since March 31 should be maintained until the bloodshed ended.

COLUMN

Charles honours victims of Leningrad siege

ST PETERSBURG, Russia (R) — Britain's Prince Charles paid tribute Tuesday to the stoical spirit of St Petersburg as he remembered the hundreds of thousands of Russians who perished in the World War II siege of their city. The heir to the British throne, on the second day of a visit to Russia's former imperial capital, laid a wreath at a cemetery containing nearly half a million victims of the 900-day Nazi blockade of Leningrad, as it was then called. The first Russian visit by a top British royal since the 1917 revolution is intended to highlight the need for foreign help to tackle the city's current crisis of economic stagnation, crumbling cultural heritage and rampant crime. But it also has a historical resonance, underlining the end of the only war frictions which bitherto precluded such contacts between British royals and the state responsible for the murder of their deposed tsarist relatives, Nicholas II and his family, in 1918. The prince has made himself St Petersburg's international champion, using the prestige of his four-day tour to trumpet a "city in peril" campaign for increased cultural tourism and outside investment to revive its fortunes.

Abortion pill to be tested in U.S.

WASHINGTON (R) — Abortion rights activists saw another goal accomplished, with a breakthrough that will make the controversial RU 486 abortion pill available to U.S. women in clinical trials. In a deal that took over a year to negotiate, the French manufacturer of the drug, Roussel Uclaf, announced Monday it was turning over all U.S. patent rights to the New York-based nonprofit Population Council, which will seek a manufacturer. Roussel's parent company, Germany's Hoechst Ag, does a multi-billion-dollar business in the United States, mostly with products unrelated to medicine. A Roussel lawyer declined to comment on fears of a boycott but confirmed the company had been reluctant to enter the politically-charged U.S. abortion arena. Clinical trials for 2,000 women at 12 sites should start in early autumn, and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) said approval should come in 15 to 22 months. FDA Commissioner David Kessler told a subcommittee of the House Small Business Committee, "Medical science is finally winning out over political science," said subcommittee Chairman Oregon Democrat Ron Wyden. More than 150,000 women have used the so-called abortion pill in France, Sweden and Britain. A similar drug is also widely used in China. Research is also under way to see whether RU 486 can combat a range of diseases, including diabetes, breast cancer and endometriosis. Though an alternative to surgical abortion, the abortion pill is more complicated than merely popping a pill. Used in the first seven weeks of pregnancy, the procedure involves two types of medication, RU 486 and a Prostaglandin. The woman must typically go to the doctor three times, and be monitored for side effects including excessive bleeding.

Officially, Indonesia has 263 HIV cases

JAKARTA (R) — Indonesia said Tuesday it had 263 HIV cases, but the figures have been contested by ministers and aid workers who argue the figure could be 200 times higher. The official Antara News Agency quoted the director general for medical services, Soejoga, as saying Monday that 50 of the 263 people carrying the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) had developed the deadly acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS). Last week Coordinating Minister for Health and Social Services Azwar Anas said that for every certified sufferer, "there could be between 100 to 200 behind every one of them." Indonesia has been preparing measures to combat what it fears may be an epidemic on the scale of regional neighbours, such as Thailand. Soejoga was quoted by Antara as saying in the central Java town of Yogyakarta that all blood donors must be tested before giving blood, and medical services must monitor known AIDS patients. He did not give details.